

**ReFraming: transformations of subjectivity through writing**

by

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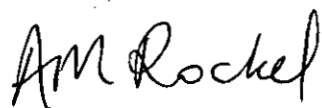
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## **PhD thesis abstract**

**'ReFraming: Transformations of subjectivity through writing'**

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'ReFraming' comprises an introduction, five chapters and a conclusion. The introduction describes the inception of the project in a study of writing practices among a group of fiction writers, which identifies a process of self-transformation as an experience common to members of the group. Having identified this experience as the subject of study for a thesis, it gives a rationale for a choice of the work of poet and novelist Janet Frame, in that she enacts through her writing a process of subjective change that embodies the self-transformation identified as integral to creative practice. The introduction also signals the project of reading the work of Michel de Certeau, and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari alongside that of Frame, as theorists who offer approaches to understanding subjective transformation.

Chapter One places the work of Frame alongside that of the literary theorist and philosopher Michel de Certeau as a way of reading motivation in Frame's work. This chapter conducts a thematic survey of the novels' concerns with experiences of subjective confinement, using Certeau's figuration of language structures as sites of constraint and subversion, and linking Frame's response with Certeau's ideas of tactics and strategies.

Chapter Two surveys the work of the philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari on processes of creative thought as they relate to narratorial practices in Frame's novels, and relates her project to their concept of becoming, via the genre of minor literature. The chapter presents an argument that Frame's writing enacts a double becoming in that her creation of altered subjective space for herself also creates possibilities of collective change.

Chapter Three conducts a chronological survey of Frame's novels, identifying structural elements and linguistic approaches to the creation of altered subjectivity in writing. It treats Frame's body of work as a written entity characterised by an

elaboration of the procedures and concepts through which subjective change can be understood. Another movement of double becoming is presented in the movement by which the praxis of each successive book forms a 'theoretical' base for further praxis in the work that follows.

Chapter Four approaches the relation of a reading/writing collective to this transformative theorising of subjectivity through a writing practice. The chapter begins by considering ways in which Frame gives voice to the connection of writing to the collective, tracing her characters' articulation of a responsibility to speak before those who have been unable to do so. It goes on to consider the reflex of this doubling of Frame's becoming, through responses of the collective to her work.

Chapter Five comprises a collection of poems written as part of the thesis, enacting and meditating on ways my own theoretical and writing practices have modified one another in the process of thinking and writing. The poems are also a direct response to Frame's work, thus forming an extension of the previous chapter's considerations of collectivity in reading/writing.

The conclusion summarises the movement of ideas throughout the thesis using Frame's references to point of view as a structuring device.

## Acknowledgements

This thesis was begun during a period of considerable change in the then English Department at the University of Tasmania, and I would like to acknowledge all those who, in consequence, have been involved in supervising the work. My thanks to Dr Ruth Blair and Dr Philip Mead for their encouragement during the early stages.

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Thanks to Margaret Hicks and Julia Baird for their unfailing administrative efficiency and support.

And, of course, thanks to my family and friends, *sine qua non*, who believed for me during times when I lost my own sense that I could finish the job.

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## Chronological list of works by Janet Frame

- 1951 *The Lagoon: Stories* (short stories)
- 1957 *Owls Do Cry*
- 1961 *Faces in the Water*
- 1962 *The Edge of the Alphabet*
- 1963 *Snowman, Snowman: Fables and Fantasies* (novella)
- 1963 *The Reservoir: Stories and Sketches*
- 1963 *Scented Gardens for the Blind*
- 1965 *The Adaptable Man*
- 1966 *A State of Siege*
- 1967 *The Pocket Mirror* (poetry)
- 1968 *Yellow Flowers in the Antipodean Room (The Rainbirds)*
- 1969 *Mona Minim and the Smell of the Sun* (children's story)
- 1970 *Intensive Care*
- 1972 *Daughter Buffalo*
- 1979 *Living in the Maniototo*
- 1983 *You Are Now Entering the Human Heart* (short stories)
- 1983 *To the Is-Land: Autobiography 1*
- 1984 *An Angel at My Table: Autobiography 2*
- 1985 *The Envoy from Mirror City: Autobiography 3*
- 1988 *The Carpathians*

## List of abbreviations used for titles of works by Janet Frame

Editions listed are those from which page numbers are cited

AMT Frame, Janet. *An Angel At My Table: Autobiography 2*. London: Paladin 1987.

SS———. *A State of Siege*. Sydney: Harper Collins 1991.

DB———. *Daughter Buffalo*. London: Harper Collins 1993.

FW———. *Faces in the Water*. London: The Women's Press 1993.

IC———. *Intensive Care*. Wellington: Reed 1971.

LM———. *Living in the Maniototo*. London: The Women's Press 1992.

ODC———. *Owls Do Cry*. London: The Women's Press 1994.

SGB———. *Scented Gardens for the Blind*. New York: Braziller 1980.

AM———. *The Adaptable Man*. New York: Braziller 1992.

TC———. *The Carpathians*. London: Harper Collins 1993.

EA———. *The Edge of the Alphabet*. New York: Braziller 1995.

EMC———. *The Envoy from Mirror City: Autobiography 3*. London: Paladin 1987.

TIL———. *To the Is-Land: Autobiography 1*. London: Paladin 1987.

YF———. *Yellow Flowers in the Antipodean Room*. New York: Braziller 1994.



## Introduction

It was my writing that at last came to my rescue. It is little wonder that I value writing as a way of life when it actually saved my life. (AMT 106)

'ReFraming: transformations of subjectivity through writing' is constructed using a particular engagement with the work of the poet and novelist Janet Frame, and with the work of the theorists Michel de Certeau, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, to argue that creative use of language is a project of subjective transformation. This transformation takes the form of what can be described in Deleuze and Guattari's terms as a double becoming, one that creates subjective space for the practitioner of language, and at the same time alters the constructions of language in which she is embedded. My analysis of Frame's writing is carried out with the aim of considering how transformation is enacted through her creation of a body of work, and how, in bringing about change for herself and altering subjective conditions around her, the writer creates the possibility of further transformations in her readers, in another doubling movement which can in turn be passed on to other readers/writers. As a project, the thesis has taken me through a double becoming of another kind also: retheorising creativity in general — including that embodied in my own writing practice — has involved me in a retheorising of the work of Janet Frame.

It seems ironic that, in order to make possible an approach to the work of Janet Frame, it is necessary to offer some of the biographical information she has spent her life effacing/re-presenting as a condition of being able to write. A project such as hers, which I read as one of resubjectification, has demanded that she firmly rebuff, for most of her life, all attempts to categorise or inscribe her in terms of available discourse. The fact that she has now authorised a biography by the historian Michael King, forthcoming in June 2000, attests, I would argue, to her sense that she has achieved the ground of an altered subject position. It is on the understanding, then, that biographical information currently available has mostly come from Frame herself as part of

her writing project via her volumes of autobiography, that I offer some details that may help to situate her work.

Frame was born on 28 August 1924 in the South Island town of Dunedin, New Zealand, the fourth of five siblings. Her parents, Lottie Godfrey and George Frame, were descendents of Scottish and English immigrant workers whose culture characterised, and still characterises, much of Pakeha New Zealand society — a culture determined by a Calvinist work ethic, but also featuring tensions inherent in a certain independence of thought accompanying a strain of autodidacticism. Frame's mother's family was Christadelphian, and the Godfrey family atmosphere of millenarian longing combined with a reverence for European literary forms, particularly poetry, replicated itself for her children in the peculiarly plangent linguistic milieu in which they in turn were raised. On reaching adulthood, and before marriage, Lottie Godfrey went into service to wealthy families, including, interestingly, those of the writers Katherine Mansfield and Charles Brasch. Frame's father, George, served in France in World War I, before returning to civilian life as a railway worker. His work entailed several moves with his family between small South Island settlements. A more permanent move to the coastal town of Oamaru during the early years of Frame's schooling marked a phase in the family's life that was to be characterised by increasing emotional and material difficulty. Frame's elder brother developed epilepsy, a condition that precipitated Lottie Frame from millenarian fantasy into fullblown denial and pursuit of a miracle cure.

In the context of the Great Depression of the 30s, this preoccupation with a sick child to the exclusion of the other siblings was combined with financial strain. The family was characterised by an increasingly desperate atmosphere, exacerbated by frequent outbursts of anxiety and anger from Frame's father, who, like so many others, had never fully recovered from the trauma of his wartime experiences. Frame and her sisters ran wild and negotiated as they were able the social nightmare of the town and the school where they were classified as 'dirty and poor'. Then, in Frame's first year at junior high, her

older sister Myrtle was drowned. (Ten years later, another sister, Isobel, also drowned.) Cultural, historical, familial and adventitious circumstances were combining to produce an environment in which Frame describes herself as turning increasingly to the constructions of literature for an understanding of what was happening in her life: 'the poets ... were writing the story of my feelings' (*TIL* 111). As her adolescence progressed, immersed in a subjective realm disastrously and definitively at odds with societal expectations of a girl of her class and culture, the disjunction between Frame's experiential and affective worlds eventually became insupportable. In 1945 she was admitted to a psychiatric hospital for the first of a series of stays that would encompass most of the years of her twenties.

Recognition by others of Janet Frame's work as a writer caused psychiatric authorities, at the institution where she was a committed patient, to reverse their decision to subject her to leucotomy. Changing herself by writing, she caused change in those who encountered what she wrote, in a process like the *symplothes* described by Deleuze and Guattari in their account of becoming:

becoming lacks a subject distinct from itself ... it has no term, since its term in turn only exists as taken up in another becoming of which it is the subject, and which coexists, forms a block, with the first. (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, 238)

Becoming is always double, that which one becomes becomes no less than the one that becomes — a block is formed, essentially mobile, never in equilibrium. (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, 305)

What follows is my attempt to understand processes by which subjectivities shape and are shaped by creative practice in this way. This work is not about mastery of a given field (Frame; literary theory) but rather a walk among approaches and images in search of what Spinoza calls 'adequate ideas' about creativity in the culture which formed me, 1950s and '60s New Zealand, where

[the] fundamental mode was confrontation — the result of deep habits of thinking that set society and the individual in opposition, as two contrary and antagonistic categories, neither of which can expand or develop except at the expense of the other. (Gablik 68)

This is the ambience into which I was born; the devastations of monologue. As a response to that, what interests me is conversation, a way of meeting that need not end in confrontation. It is all that is left: the next necessary thing.

A few years ago, some friends and I began to keep notes, a sort of biography of pieces of writing — poetry — in progress. I became very interested in moments of inception, points of energy around which works coalesce — their *salience*, in all its senses:

*Salire*, leap. Leaping, jumping ... of animals ... of water ... Salient point: in old medical use, the heart as it first appears in an embryo: hence, the first beginning of life or motion; the starting-point of anything. (*OED*)

For me, poems begin with fragmentary images, phrases, sensations that stay because of a quality of excitement and half-recognition that accompanies them. Writing is in part a habit of attention to these moments that seem to invite me to step towards them. Their fragmentary, puzzling qualities lead me to make up a landscape, a history for them, or to allow them to resettle to make their own landscape. Writing, I learn what I mean by giving meaning, waiting for meaning to come. Relocated in this way, experiences remain mine and at the same time become new to me, as I become new in them. Moments of bodily experience become what Seamus Heaney, talking about the physical effects of poetic meter, calls 'the sensation of revelation' (Heaney, *Eureka Street*, 25). A passage from Julian of Norwich describes this process:

And he showed me more, a little thing, the size of a hazel-nut, on the palm of my hand, round like a ball. I looked at it thoughtfully and

wondered, 'What is this?' And the answer came, 'It is all that is made.' I marvelled that it continued to exist and did not suddenly disintegrate; it was so small. And again my mind supplied the answer, 'It exists, both now and forever, because God loves it.' (Julian 68)

Aspects and associations of a physical memory—the feeling and look of a hazel-nut held in the hand: perhaps pleasure in its small, round, smoothness suggesting wholeness, completion; wonder at the plant implicit in the seed, the life force that maintains an organism's integrity — coalesce as a changed subjectivity. Sensations insist on 'thoughtful' interrogation, and at the same time act as guarantors of resulting insights:

"It happened *there*" the mystic can say, because he keeps, engraved in his memory, the smallest circumstances of that instant ... But, he adds, "it was not *that*," because for him the experience has to do with something other than a site, an impression, or a certain knowledge ...

The unsuspected, that has the violence of the unforeseen, gathers together all the days of existence, as the whistle of the shepherd gathers his flock, and reunites them in the continuity of a disquieting relationship with the other. (Certeau, *Diacritics*, 17)

What is it that determines which moments *insist* in this way? Examining the 'biographies' of my own work I began to be aware of patterns that were a response to the subjectivity of longing and distance into which I was born. Subjectivity of this kind is described by Lacan in 'The Mirror Stage':

[the] jubilant assumption of his specular image by the child at the *infans* stage, still sunk in his motor incapacity and nursing dependence, would seem to exhibit in an exemplary situation the symbolic matrix in which the *I* is precipitated in a primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as subject. This form would have to be called the Ideal-I, if we wished to incorporate it into our usual register,

in the sense that it will also be the source of secondary identifications.

(Lacan 2)

Life and energy remain out of reach on the other side of the mirror with the 'Ideal-I'; mirror-subjectivity pours vitality away into compelling 'secondary identifications' (Lacan 2):

Hail, holy queen, mother of mercy, hail our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve, to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us; and after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus, o clement, o loving, o sweet virgin Mary. (Catholic liturgy)

At the same time, because it excludes and makes Other those aspects of culture which carry experiences of presence or immediacy, it allows energy to collect in these 'places of maximum saturation' (Foucault, *Language*, 326). One of these places, enacted around me as I was growing up, is the experience of life as a process of creation through sensation and response, from the first sneezed breath:

Tihei mauri ora.

Tihei uriuri, tihei nakonako.

Ka tau, ha! whakatau ...

I sneeze, it is life.

It is darkness, it is blackness.

Lay, ha! set in its place, the sky above.

Lay, ha! set in its place the earth below ...

(Maori ritual chant)

For me, writing is a result of encounters with these 'othered' possibilities; an 'ethnographic moment' (Denning, UTas, 1995) of the kind that occurs when

those present at a meeting of cultures to begin to represent the encounter to themselves.

Sensation and response: energy gathered in the possibility of writing as *conversation* — ‘having one’s being in or among’ (*OED*) — encounter with the intelligence of and in *things*. I do not mean transcendence of culture or language — they are ‘given’ aspects of being here in the way my body is. As James Hillman says, describing the thinking of zoologist and ‘philosopher of nature’ Adolf Portmann:

*selbstdarstellung* or display of interiority is as essential to organic life as are the useful behaviours of survival ... each species presents itself in designs, coats, tails, feathers ... I think that the human form of display, in the ethologist’s sense of ‘display,’ is *rhetoric* ... [o]ur ability to sing, speak, tell tales, recite, orate ... Giraffes and tigers have splendid coats; we have splendid speech. (Hillman 294–95)

I want to be able to retain awareness of language as a *thing*, the body of culture, a creature like any other, adapted to its environment, bearing its history in the delicate memory of a tail at the end of its spine, remnants of a fish’s jawbone in the structure of its ear. To retain a sense that the language-creature is still developing, could have developed in other ways; that it *is spoken* (the language-maker tries to speak of what is outside language) along with everything else, in the conjunction of time and place. Conversation, listening for the voice of things is listening at crossroads, forks in the path, for these other possibilities. Acute sensitivity to a particular place over time, and to a particular time in one place is a listening stance, an attitude which makes conversation possible, imagining and re-imagining the physiology of a culture, hearing a heartbeat, recognising appendicitis, wondering about toenails, wisdom teeth, gender.

Longing for return, for the original speech of things-in-themselves is a longing for the shaman’s power of identity, a deep and paradoxically

estranging familiarity that corresponds to the Deleuzian 'percept' when, as François Zourabichvili puts it, 'one sees the invisible, the imperceptible' (Zourabichvili 190):

'Our' interpretation is rightly concerned with the very force of existence of things, the dynamism of space and time that insists within them and that they affirm ... things, in their manner of existence, resonate within us, as a manner for us to exist ... it is the resonance of their life in our own, becoming one of its possibilities, one of its levels ... It is to perceive and estimate the forces of what we see, to take possession of them for an instant, to live them, to test them on oneself. (Zourabichvili 191-92)

This is a dream of knowledge that could confer a sense of salience, making it possible to discard metaphor that points to itself, and to move toward the language-creature in its metonymy; the single words that are its tracks. To move away from symbol and towards sign as James Boon defines them:

signs empower and symbols often victimise. (Boon 53)

In the influential terms of Charles Peirce's semiotics, a 'symbol' is something that replaces something for someone ... Anthropologists building on Peirce designate full sets of conventional replaceables a 'culture'. (Boon 64)

Summoning the sensate, the animal self gone to ground at the heart of culture. The page becomes a performance space like the arena of dance, where signs must be experienced together with one another: meaning is generated by what they mean *together*. Language is allowed to be its own metaphor, acknowledging the polysemic associations of words but refusing to assign them any one meaning by saying *this is only that*. In this way, the unsayable is spoken — as Frame puts it:



one of the fascinations of writing ... is in the coding of what is written to describe what is not written. I like to think of the contents of a book as a signpost to a world that is not even mentioned. (Mercer, *Janet Frame*, viii)

I would add, 'because it can't be, yet'. I think of writing as a place to practise not (yet?) liveable but necessary experience. By incubation in the world of art, the sayable, the liveable is discovered, or as Michel de Certeau says, 'literature is the theoretic discourse of the historical process' (Certeau, *Practice*, 18). Writing can prefigure change just as the intuitions of physicists and mathematicians sometimes precede verification 'in the world', and it can precipitate change, out of awareness that another way can be thought. The next necessary thing probably always looks like madness at first, precisely because it has been unimaginable until now, and until we are drawn together into its madness so that it becomes the new sane. In *The Carpathians*, Janet Frame describes the collapse of ordinary distinctions of time and place under the influence of the Gravity Star, a previously unknown phenomenon that weighs and determines the nearness or salience of experience in new ways. The precipitation of all languages of the world follows in a midnight rain whose silence is filled with a 'rage of cries' (TC 125), of grief and anger and fear of loss:

no part of the chorus had words of any recognisable language. The sounds were primitive, like the first cries of those who had never known or spoken words but whose urgency to communicate becomes a mixture of isolated syllables, vowels, consonants; yet within and beyond the chorus, recognisable as long as the human brain held some stem (of crystal, bone, iron, stone, gossamer), there came a hint, an inkling of order, a small strain recognisable as music, not replacement of what had been lost but new music, each note effortlessly linking with the next, like dew-drops or mercury after momentary separation from the whole. (TC 126)

When I began to think about the way creative practice changes those who engage with it, Frame's novels kept coming to mind, both as writing that deals directly with problems of articulating the necessary not-yet-known, and as a body of work across which I could trace a writer's changing imagery and thinking about the process.<sup>1</sup> Since I read *Owls Do Cry* at thirteen, her writing has *insisted*, for me. I realised then with a shock of combined horror and elation, like finding myself in the presence of some large breathing creature, that language till now used by me as received, without being 'touched or shaped or changed' (*LM* 118), could be an instrument of *poiesis*, making. It is a practising place for the 'hint, an inkling of order', 'within and beyond the chorus' of rage and fear with which we confront our own disorderly other, a practising place for the new selves each moment demands we become. In drawing us into the place called madness, changing our minds about it, she saves more lives than her own.

In ways that I only begin to recognise and articulate now, her books have made a living creature out of *my* world. Frame showed me language as agency, as a process of sensation and response using materials at hand. The novels invite me towards them in response to all the impulses that inform my own desire to write, giving voice to the othered and the abject, communicating language as sensation. They also answer my ambivalence about being a member of the language-species, dealing as they do with the way the creative power of language is also its power to record and reinforce cultural insight from which it is immediately necessary to move on. The difficulty of imaginative mobility is directly proportional to the effectiveness of current metaphor, whose power to illuminate is also its power to dazzle and transfix. Frame, representing both the possibility of producing transformative work and the work itself, has given me an experience of language-as-agency, and from the time of this experience I have understood writing and writers to be guardians and midwives of a continuously transforming self. In the pages that

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<sup>1</sup> Ian Buchanan argues that "Taking an author's work "as a whole" is undoubtedly the most crucial feature of Deleuze's philosophical praxis. "You have to take the work as a whole, to try and follow rather than judge it, see where it branches out in different directions, where it gets bogged down, moves forward, makes a breakthrough ..." Unless you take the work as a whole, he says, "you just won't understand it at all" [Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 140, 131] (Buchanan, *SAQ*, 387).

follow it is the world of guardianship that I want to encounter, learning what conditions will create a container in which *the next necessary thing* can be incubated. Sometimes the encounter occurs by means of the imagination of intellect, sometimes through poetry—the intelligence of images, where

faithful attention to the imaginal world, this love which transforms mere images into presences, gives them living being, or rather reveals the living being which they do naturally contain, is nothing other than *remythologizing*. (Hillman 85)

Poems included here are selves I bring back from territories I find in Frame's work, and from places my own thoughts, and the thoughts of others about conditions for writing, have taken me. This thesis presents a reading of the work of Frame's contemporaries Certeau and Deleuze and Guattari as theorists of the possibility of transformation through language — theorising which is itself a process of becoming-other — and a reading of the work of Janet Frame as an instance of transformation in language. This interrelation of analysis and praxis is integral to the work and has consequences for both form and content, since the argument moves the work from analysis to practice. Throughout, theory is presented as both an instance and a vector of practice, with each chapter presenting a stage in the unfolding of this understanding.

Chapter One traces a chronology of motivation in Frame's novels, offering a reading that draws on Michel de Certeau's figurations of linguistic space, and presents writing as a tactical response, in Certeau's terms, to urgent subjective necessities. Chapter Two links several of Deleuze and Guattari's ideas, reading modalities of creative thought articulated in *What is Philosophy?* as styles of becoming which are enacted in the category of minor literature as described by them. This reading is offered as a way into understanding Frame's writing as a practice that enacts a double becoming, creating changed conditions and bringing about the possibility of further change. Chapter Three presents a chronological reading of Frame's novels as an elaboration of altered subjectivities resulting from this writing practice.

Chapter Four takes implications of the double becoming that relates theory and praxis a step further by arguing that creative work, and Frame's work in particular, is used by the reading/writing collective as 'theory' that provides a jumping-off point for a further set of practices. The chapter begins by conducting a chronological survey of the novels to argue that it is possible to trace an articulation by Frame of this understanding of writing as 'theory' in the sense of fulfilling a responsibility to and for collective change. The second part of the chapter treats responses of the collective, offering readers'/writers' accounts of how Frame's work has been successful in bringing about change, in an elaboration of the understanding that theory and practice are involved with each other so as to produce a constant movement in which each moment of praxis in turn becomes theory from which further practice can emerge. Chapter Five moves to a detailed instance of change informed by Frame's 'theory' through a collection of poems tracing subjective shifts experienced as part of the process of writing this thesis. The typography of this chapter reflects the movement of the argument, as a double movement unfolds, by which practice informs theory, which in turn informs further practice. The first nine poems were written in response to a chronological reading of Frame's novels, and are set out separately from the commentary in which they are embedded. As the writing progressed, this relation of poems to theoretical matrix became a site productive of further theory/praxis. Subsequent poems, which approach my own relation to language, refused typographical distinctions I had used earlier — title, separate page, different line spacing. As a result of a mutual deterritorialisation, in Deleuzian terms, both my theoretical approach and my writing practice had changed in the process of writing the thesis.

Because the thesis includes a series of chronological readings of Frame's novels, in the interest of clarity I break conventions of style by including references to publication dates on a number of occasions, in order to situate the novels within my argument. Throughout, from time to time I use the image of exploration in describing my arguments' movements, in Frame's

own sense of her work as exploration — ‘seeing what pattern emerges’ (Alley and Williams 46), and also because it is an image that fits well with the theorists whose work I will be drawing on: Michel de Certeau figures the reclaiming of speech as a street-level ‘search of a proper’ (Certeau, *Practice*, 103) within the structures of the city of available language. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari describe creative thought as acting in the service of ‘an *I do not know* that has become ... the condition of creation itself’ (Deleuze and Guattari *Philosophy*, 128). In the context of the postcolonial experience exploration also figures the invasions and contestations of subjective space that form the material of Janet Frame’s work.

In approaching Frame’s project, which is positioned, I will argue, on the border between modernism and postmodernism, I use terms that belong to both discourses, and to some extent, to the discourse of Romanticism. The term ‘imagination’ is used in the chapters that follow to describe a mode of creative thought that, according to my reading of her work, Frame seeks both to deploy in her writing and to articulate as a writing practice. Imagination here refers to a subjectivity which seeks to construct itself in language, but which is obliged to reconstruct language in order to do so. In this context, it resonates perhaps most strongly with Coleridge’s usage,<sup>2</sup> challenging, as it does, what Patricia Waugh describes as “‘everyday’ language [that] endorses and sustains ... power structures through a continuous process of naturalisation” (Waugh 11). The term ‘available language’ is used to refer to the ‘naturalised’ subjectivity inscribed in language, with which imagination is obliged to work. Deleuze and Guattari’s term ‘man-standard’ (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, 291) is used to refer to the form available language (and the subjectivity it constructs) takes in the cultural-historical moment of the writing. Accordingly, ‘standard language’ referring to the man-standard, and ‘standard subjectivity’ are used interchangeably to some extent, drawing on structuralist and post-structuralist assertions including those of Deleuze, arguing that subjectivity is constructed within and by language, and that

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<sup>2</sup> In her autobiography, Frame recalls learning by heart, as a student, the passage on Imagination in Coleridge’s *Biographia Literaria* (AMT 30).

language operates as a system that exceeds and precedes any one user or group of users.

Another usage that may require explanation is my use of the term *figuration*, which refers to images that are part of an active deployment of metaphor in the service of renewed subjectivity. In this sense it is close to a verb-form of the term 'figural' used by Deleuze after Lyotard with reference to Cézanne's use of 'form that is connected to a sensation, and that conveys the violence of this sensation directly to the nervous system' (D. Smith 44). In this sense, as Rosi Braidotti argues, 'the notion of "figurations" — in contrast to the representational function of "metaphors" — emerges as crucial to Deleuze's notion of a conceptually charged use of the imagination' (Braidotti 170). As I use it, the active term *figuration* (infinitive: to figure) is extended to include the creation of 'forms'/images that are adequate to other modes of thought elaborated by Deleuze and Guattari in addition to sensation. I call these modes *observation* — the formation of a subjective position adjacent to sensation — and *fabulation* — the narrative organisation of sensation and observation. Images used in this way to mark and elaborate a process of subjective reorganisation can also be understood via Certeau's theorisation of 'fables':

Certeau argues that mystic texts act(ed) as 'fables'. He means by this that they shook up the language of their time. They re-employed the verbal matter available to them in order to open linguistic spaces for that which had previously been unable to speak ... A 'fabulous' use of language authorises without being authorised. It opens up possibilities in the instituted order of things. It corresponds to a form of *poesis* (cf. the Greek, *poiein*, to create, generate, invent). (Ahearne 103–04)<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ahearne offers an instance of image-as-fable in Certeau's analysis of Teresa of Avila: 'Certeau ... analyses the use made by Teresa of Avila in *The Interior Castle* of the unstable figure of the 'castle-crystal' in order to represent the 'soul'. The figure is unrepresentable as such. It works for Certeau like a 'fable' which Teresa fabricates by bringing together differently charged connotative elements circulating in diverse religious, poetic and epistemic contexts' (Ahearne 110).

Via the agency of images adequate to each mode, sensation, observation and fabulation can, I argue, offer an approach that understands writing as a project effecting an open-ended process of resubjectification, in a double becoming that implicates both writer and reader. I present the writing practice of Janet Frame as an example of such a project, extending its implications to a reading/writing community, and to my own practice in particular.

## 1 Why write? Complicating a self in language

Every story is a travel story (Certeau, *Practice*, 115)

Space is a practiced place (Certeau, *Practice*, 117)

In this chapter I want to consider the work of Janet Frame alongside some of Michel de Certeau's ideas relating to marginalised groups and their responses to structures that disempower them. I argue that Certeau's theorising of what he calls 'strategic' constraints, and the 'tactical' moves made by those who experience these constraints, can offer a way of understanding both the motivation of a writing practice and the ways in which such a practice might constitute itself. In this context, an approach can be made to Frame's work that articulates forces that impel her writing, and elaborates a reading of why her 'operations' in language might be characterised by particular forms and style. Using Certeau's spatialised figurations of tactical 'moves', it is possible to trace the locations of Frame's responses within strategic constructions of language, and to follow their itinerary, as, book by book, she carries out her guerilla writing practice.

In his essay 'Walking in the City' in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Certeau uses the image of the city and its inhabitants as a way of thinking about language. Describing a visit to the top of the World Trade Centre in New York, he compares the pleasure of seeing the city laid out like a map with the sense of liberation and clarity offered by a world in which language fixes meanings and patterns of articulation:

[E]levation ... transforms the bewitching world by which one was "possessed" into a text that lies before one's eyes. It allows one to read it, to be a solar Eye, looking down like a god. The exaltation of a scopic and gnostic drive: the fiction of knowledge is related to this lust to be a viewpoint and nothing more. (Certeau, *Practice*, 92)



From this height it is possible to understand the urge to institute an order of meaning 'whose condition of possibility is an oblivion and a misunderstanding of practices' (Certeau, *Practice*, 93), and to believe that such an institution is possible. Here structures are the important thing; 'practices' — how people use and respond to structures — are irrelevant. Language at 'street level' is very different:

The ordinary practitioners of the city live "down below," below the thresholds at which visibility begins. They walk — an elementary form of this experience of the city; they are walkers, *Wandersmänner*, whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban "text" they write without being able to read it. (Certeau, *Practice*, 93)

Certeau uses the experience of moving about the city as an image for language structures and the way people inhabit and relate to them. He explores ways in which subjectivity is formed by language structures, and ways in which those structures are maintained or modified by subjects' practices. Desire to 'see' and 'know,' in ways that remain 'readable' over time, fosters constructions (the sky-scraper, the objective view) that make this kind of seeing and knowing possible. This desire exists in tension with the needs of language users whose experiences lead them to 'rewrite' the structures they have inherited. Fiction can be a place where practices of 'reading' and 'writing' in the senses outlined above coincide. A writer's job in this case is to remain aware of current configurations of language, while finding ways to move about within them that best suit a user's needs and experiences.

Writing of this kind can act as a counter-impulse to that of the 'space planner' intent on 'keeping aloof' (Certeau, *Practice*, 92–93) from experience. Writers can ensure that, at times and in places, language is modified in ways that make it approach adequacy to users' needs. Writing becomes an activity that can be understood as 'tactical' in the context of Certeau's famous theorisation of 'tactics' and strategies':

I call a "strategy" the calculus of force-relationships which becomes possible when a subject of will and power (a proprietor, and enterprise, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated from an "environment". A strategy assumes a place that can be circumscribed as proper (*propre*) and thus serve as the basis for generating relations with an exterior distinct from it (competitors, adversaries, "clientèles," "targets," or "objects" of research). Political, economic, and scientific rationality has been constructed on this strategic model.

I call a "tactic," on the other hand, a calculus which cannot count on a "proper" (a spatial or institutional localization), nor thus on a borderline distinguishing the other as a visible totality. The place of a tactic belongs to the other. A tactic insinuates itself into the other's place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance ... because it does not have a place, a tactic depends on time — it is always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized "on the wing." Whatever it wins, it does not keep. It must constantly manipulate events in order to turn them into opportunities. (Certeau, *Practice*, xix)

This approach elucidates the novels of Janet Frame as a body of work informed by life-and-death necessities that urge modification of language and meaning structures. Thinking of Frame's novels as enacting a tactical practice in Certeau's terms also provides an approach to understanding her writing as a collective enterprise, in that the tactical 'insinuations' carried out by her texts become available to her readers also.

Read chronologically, Frame's novels both articulate necessities and urgencies of writing, and provide a place for experiments in modification of language structures. Pierre Macherey's explication of a Deleuzian hermeneutic of expression in Spinoza can be applied to give an understanding of this double dynamic:

the outwardly linear discourse of the *Ethics* actually proceeds on two different levels at once ... on the level of its unbroken necessary progression, and then beneath the surface, where we find the concrete realm of affects that traverse this progression, restoring its deeper sense in an apparently disordered (but in fact differently ordered) succession of sudden flashes; and preparing the way for the final integration of concepts and affects. (Macherey 143)

Frame's novels show the narrow streets of the city of language and call out ways of walking there that make a breathable space. They offer the sensations of constraint that make it necessary to walk differently, and book by book they posit the possibility of an itinerary across which new ways can be learned. As a body of work, the novels offer themselves for an encounter like that described by Tom Conley in his analysis of Certeau's work on, and modelling of, medieval 'reading' practices:

It appears that Michel de Certeau "reads" Nicholas of Cusa in the same way he "sees" Hieronymus Bosch's great triptych, "The Garden of Earthly Delights," that hangs in the Prado. In that painting he finds the solace of an atopia, *un lieu pour se perdre*, that takes him off the modern map that generally assigns human subjects to specific places and destinies. The painting looks at us, suggesting that we are impelled to meet it as if it were a living being ... The world of the text toward which the medieval individual's gaze is directed also redounds and effectively "reads" the person. In other words, to the degree it is felt to be a *speculum*, the world draws from subjects the apprehensions that allow them to see how, why, and with what modes of selection and exclusion they sense who they are. The world "analyzes" us as soon as we realize how our gaze moves toward the world. Iconic texts "read" the reader insofar as they elicit us to *see* ourselves *reading* the mirror of verbal shapes as images. (T. Conley, *Diacritics*, 43–44)

Frame gives a description in *The Carpathians* of such a conversation in text — living and being recognised in and by language — in an exchange relating to indigenous weaving practices using the plant known as New Zealand flax. The passage is itself an example of Frame's characteristic approach to text as *poesis*, in this case producing a complex that permits the 'invention' of *textiles*/Freud on weaving as women's only technological innovation/the irresistible figure of the variable endemic, *Phormium tenax*, tenacious lily:

'Can you tell me something about flax weaving?'

Rua smiled. 'First,' she said, 'you must *know* flax. I know flax and flax knows me. You understand the sort of knowing I mean?'

'I do,' Mattina said, with rising excitement at the recognition that here was *her* kind of knowing; and ... that of the others in Kowhai Street; the knowing that included but was not dependent on the Memory Flower or the Gravity Star; that by itself could banish distance, nearness, weight, lightness, up, down, today, yesterday, tomorrow ...

'The important thing to remember is that flax knows about you, your life, your secrets, and when you plant it, it's there watching you, knowing you; you can hide nothing from it. If it won't grow for you, you can be sure you have hurt it.'

'Oh,' Mattina said uneasily.

'Flax is always alive. See this kete?'

She held up a woven flax basket ...

'This is alive, listening to us now. Yes, you must have a special feeling about flax to be able to grow it, cut it without making it bleed, scrape it without hurting it, and weave it without going against its wishes.' (TC 86)

Frame's textuality, then, points ways of writing and reading that challenge, by 'analysing' strategic organisations of subjectivity.

Frame 'the figure, the enigma, and the many legends' (Prentice 2), has been a talismanic presence for generations of New Zealanders, her 'biomythography, this invention of the public Frame ... constantly being added to' (Evans, *JNZL*, 19) and continuing to refine itself, its elements assembled from her writing and from the circumstances of her life, versions of which quickly pass into public possession in a small community. The first of these elements is the knowledge that she was incarcerated, for most of her twenties, as a committed patient in various asylums, and that she was reprieved at the eleventh hour from leucotomy, as a result of a hospital superintendent's discovery that her short stories had won a literary award. This primary narrative announces both what is at stake — survival — and the manner in which the work is to proceed — by a process of recognition and reprieve. The 'biomythography', as Patrick Evans describes it in his essay 'The Case of the Disappearing Author', shows this process as a relation between Frame and the world that receives her writing, but the process happens first, and repeatedly, as part of the writing itself. Experience is articulated, mapped in such a way that re-evaluation, recognition becomes possible, and further articulation becomes possible from this new position (followed by further recognition, and so on).

Frame recognises the structures of linguistic order that determine subjectivity in her world, and in recognising them she gives herself reprieve from them. Like the Greek raconteurs described by Certeau, for Frame, stories 'are already practices. They say exactly what they do ... The story does not express a practice. It does not limit itself to telling about a movement. It makes it' (Certeau, *Practice*, 80–81). Further, this narrative experimentation that she says 'saved my life' (*AMT* 106) has also changed linguistic structures around her for good. Because fiction exists in the public arena, gains made by a writer are accessible to the whole community. In Frame's case, this effect is accentuated by another element of her legend — her reclusive habit of life, which brings a sense that no one ever knows, for sure, where she is living, although rumours abound, and a retrospective glamour surrounds a series of small towns throughout New Zealand as a result of the revelation that she did live there, for a time. She exists as a condition of possibility diffused

throughout the landscape, an 'absent figure' like the 'common man' to whom *The Practice of Everyday Life* is dedicated.

Frame's narratives, like those of the Greek storytellers, can be read as practices 'privileging two "figures" ... the dance and combat' (Certeau, *Practice*, 81). They refine knowledge of the 'proper order' — the arena of combat — so as to elaborate within it a space of subjective freedom — the dance. It's a guerrilla movement: presiding over the novels is the figure of a survivor, an escapee, a trickster who has 'entered into the movement' of her own story's necessity. Her first two novels, *Owls Do Cry* (1957) and *Faces in the Water* (1961) are surveys of the battlefield. They infiltrate the order of New Zealand as a former colony to reveal its town plan — every structure facing Home — thus functioning as "mirror-writing" that will reveal [the] occultation and silence' (Tan 28) imposed by the colonial regime. Small town life is shown to be determined by varieties of received wisdom from elsewhere, whether in the form of the aesthetic truths of English literature or the ethics of a folk Calvinism.

*Owls Do Cry* maps the 'proper order' of possibilities for the children of the Withers family — how one must think and act in order to take a place in the adult world. Toby, Francie, Daphne and Chicks negotiate their relations to the proper order as it is voiced by their parents. Bob and Amy Withers speak in collections of aphorisms, quotations and dictums — predetermined phrases, strung together. Bob, 'who did not go to Church but knew what people thought' (*ODC* 33), voices collective law, while Amy voices collective wisdom. Through the Withers children, Frame explores various attitudes of acquiescence or rebellion, as they face the disjunction between parental order and their own experiences and desires. To be unable to align oneself with received meaning systems is to be marginalised.

*Owls Do Cry* recognises ways in which order is enforced, and the reprieve which follows this recognition is achieved not through the demonstrated survival of any of the characters, but through subversion of language itself,

and through the presence of the invisible survivor-storyteller. The novel's form is already articulating street level experience; within its account of social and linguistic poverty there are already experiments which hint at practices of the invisible survivor-storyteller and others like her who, as Certeau says of the indigenous Indians of South America

*made of the rituals, representations, and laws imposed on them something quite different from what their conquerors had in mind; they subverted them not by rejecting or altering them, but by using them with respect to ends and references foreign to the system they had no choice but to accept. (Certeau, Practice, xiii)*

Linguistic rituals which organise perception are subverted by Frame, bringing them into a new objectivity; for example, in the use of quotation that alters the experience of formulaic language, creating echo-effects, turning words over, like Certeau's Marie-Jeanne, who "probably likes to use certain words for the sound that they make in her mouth and ears" (Certeau, *Practice*, 163).

Toby was a sick boy, himself, who took medicine, a teaspoon in water after each meal until his mother found out what the writing on the prescription meant. And then,

— Bromide, she said. Drugs.

So whenever the bottle of medicine came, in twos or repeats, Toby's mother said

— No child of mine, no child of mine will drink this filth; and she broke the seal and popped off the cork and poured away the thick mulatto fluid. (ODC12)

Quotations from a spoken and written vocabulary worn to transparency; 'a sick boy'; 'a teaspoon in water'; 'no child of mine': these elements are reconfigured as a kind of litany by repetition or by leaving the words standing, signifiers, sounds forced to carry the full mystery of their motivation. 'Bromide'; a sound whose context gives it immense, inchoate resonances,

menacing, magical. A new objectivity, but also a reminder of language as a physical medium. Sounds, plays on and with words are a reminder to the mapmaker that objects that make up the 'picture' have their own material existence and necessities, which remain invisible, and which cannot be assigned fixed meanings. It is through sound, then, that Frame keeps track of how and when the particular, the local, the bodily, the everyday is able to persist in the panoptically mapped and organised city of language. So she has the central character in *Faces in the Water*, an inmate of the asylum, describe her discovery of the dance of the 'permanent patients':

I watched from the special table, as from a seat in a concert hall, the raging mass of people performing their violent orchestration of unreason that seemed like a new kind of music of curse and cry ... and the movement was a ballet, and the choreographer was Insanity. (FW 90)

These narratives enact a double reprieve through recognition — that of the invisible storyteller, understanding that it is possible, as Certeau theorises in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, to 'escape without leaving' by altering the ends and references of experience, and that of the powerless ones of her story who enact this understanding, creating a space for the dance out of their need and capacity to hear 'new music' where there was none. The novels delineate ways in which language is used as a coercive force, exploring the confines of family and asylum, but the fact of their existence also signals the presence of a survivor, the invisible trickster-storyteller. Frame's own legend is the ground from which these stories rise, and it declares her connection with the world her characters inhabit.

*Faces in the Water*, appearing four years after *Owls Do Cry*, follows the fate of adults who are unable to acquiesce, and begins an exploration of how survival might be accomplished. For these adults, termed insane, the proper order is literalised in the confining structures of the asylum. 'Making something' of their surroundings consists in their capacity to *hear* openly, back and forth across the acoustic border of the thinkable; the book's narrator,



Istina Mavet, listening to the sounds made by her fellow-inmates, begins to understand that improvisations on available language might be a way to escape without leaving. This process in which words become sounds and sounds become words is a reminder that language is a bodily medium, arising from the ground of experience and constantly modulating itself to that experience, creating 'a new music'. Paradoxically, recognition of the possibility of agency is accompanied by recognition that subjectivity itself, formed within the proper order of language, is as powerfully constraining as any external structure.

In her study of Frame's novels, Judith Dell Panny's chapter on *Faces in the Water* approaches the text in terms of its 'three phases of a *catabasis* or descent, in which Istina descends into her own being' (Panny, *I Have What I Gave*, 30), each corresponding to a different stay in a mental institution. Panny describes 'the deepest level' of Istina's descent as being reached during her time in 'Lawn Lodge, the refractory ward' (FW 89) when she 'develops the understanding that many humans suffer insanity as "the product, in the beginning, of crude longing dug out from the heart"' (Panny, *I Have What I Gave*, 32–33). In the refractory ward, among the 'raging screaming fighting people' (FW 89) Istina recognises, in other words, the equation — insanity = 'crude longing' — that constructs subjective viability or in this case, non-viability, and engaging in a kind of emergency course in Saussurean linguistics, she recognises its basis in language. And so it is possible to begin the long exploration of how we assent to inhabiting inherited structures of language, and how it might be possible to modify them or leave them altogether. This realisation brings awareness that the asylum is no longer necessary as an image for the fate of the rebellious: Istina is not subjected to the lobotomy she has been threatened with and is permitted to leave.

The third novel, *The Edge of the Alphabet* (1962), begins a figuration of subjectivity and language practices as instruments of imprisonment, and the narrator introduces herself as someone who lives

at the edge of the alphabet where words like plants either grow poisonous tall and hollow about the rusted knives and empty drums of meaning, or, like people exposed to deathly weather, shed their fleshy confusion and show luminous, knitted with force and permanence (EA 3)

The world of the Withers family is once more the ground of the book, but this time the storyteller is present in the person of the narrator, Thora Pattern, giving an account of her 'journey of discovery through the lives of three people' (EA 4). The recognition arrived at in the course of this journey is that discovery of speech adequate to the experience of the marginalised is still a kind of death: to break the confines of subjectivity is to allow it to die.

The edge of the alphabet where all forms of communication between the living are useless. One day we who live at the edge of the alphabet will find our speech. (EA 302)

The novel can be read as a sustained meditation on what it means 'to survive. That is, to die' (EA 93).<sup>1</sup> The three subjects of Thora's journey of discovery represent, as Gina Mercer puts it in her study of Frame's fiction, a 'selection of death options' (Mercer, *Janet Frame*, 59) in relation to 'two choices for the marginalised: to submit, and bury alive their difference — a slow death; or to suicide and die independently and quickly ... [a] creative act' (Mercer, *Janet Frame*, 63). This summation of a range of options can be usefully applied to a reading of the novel that understands one of its major concerns to be creativity in language as an issue of survival, presented through a complex figuration of the raw materials of the writer's craft — the wood that becomes paper. Pat Keenan is represented as 'surviving' by choosing the living death of safety. In a dream, the wood that he finds is in the form of wax safety matches the size of 'faggots or walking sticks' (EA 69) that turn him into 'an old white-haired

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<sup>1</sup> Use of 'contradictory terms so as to produce what Certeau calls "split words" (*mots clivés*)' (Ahearn 108) is a feature of mystic texts as analysed by Certeau. 'Such figures are effective less through what they directly signify (this is precisely what they do not do) than through a *movement* which they produce in the reader, a form of passage through and beyond a linguistic space. The reader ... is drawn into a rhetorical process of divergence, dissonance and alteration' (Ahearn 109).

man tottering along with the aid of the stick' (EA 70). The only transformation of this material is into the blank paper of the stationery department where he takes a job as 'supervisor' (EA 278) — he is stopped completely, no longer even tottering towards his own speech. Toby's raw material is the resistant wood of his body, contorted by epileptic seizures:

His arm was shaking, not a human arm, but a branch with twigs for fingers. (EA 4)

Sometimes Toby felt the words moving in his arm, down his arm into his hand, wriggling ... He could do nothing to help them' (EA 74).

Toby longs to write the history of the Lost Tribe, but does not have the skill to do it. His words remain unwritten, 'as if he were an entire forest, with the Lost Tribe inhabiting him' (EA 4). Like the Toby Withers of *Owls Do Cry*, he is 'journeying half-way which is all torment' (ODC 83).

Zoe, speaking about a moment she experiences as 'the core of her life' (EA 239) when on board ship an unknown sailor rushes into her cabin and kisses her, figures her experience of transformation in terms of its place in the forest:

The kiss is ... my meaning, my tiny precious berry from the one branch of a huge tree in a forest where the trees are numberless. I need to walk in that forest ... I need to build a house, a tower, under and through the silver leaves into the sky. (EA 239)

She is represented as enacting the literal suicide of her former self by creating something from this experience — a sculptured world made from the silver paper lining a cigarette packet: 'it was silver trees and people ... lost in the forest' (EA 271). Zoe has been able to represent her experience of the body's forest, and of the possibility of being lost there, transforming this material into precious silver, but it makes, as she says, 'the loneliest shape I have ever seen ... I create ... but no one sees' (EA 271). She has broken through to her own

death in the construction of a world she can gesture towards, but neither she nor those with her who choose other 'lives' can speak about.

Thora Pattern's voice is witness to all three possibilities — unwillingness to speak, inability to speak, isolation through speech — and it gives proof that it is possible to speak from beyond the grave, to create *and* be seen. In the published version of *The Edge of the Alphabet*, a 'note' on an unnumbered page preceding Part One explains that the manuscript of the novel has been 'found among the papers of Thora Pattern after her death'. Gina Mercer points out that this passage is omitted from an earlier manuscript version, and that since the novel's 'ambiguity and conceptual suggestiveness are severely undercut by the knowledge of Thora's death' (Mercer, *Janet Frame*, 69), the addition was probably made as a result of editorial intervention described by Frame as occurring in relation to the novel as a whole.<sup>2</sup> This observation is especially applicable if, having made the point via Zoe Bryce that creative activity in language brings about a kind of subjective death, Frame wants to begin examining, through Thora, what kind of afterlife in language is possible.

The following novel, *Scented Gardens for the Blind* (1963), examines what it is that must die in order to make speech possible. In an image that returns attention to the body as ground of experience and articulation, the central character, Vera Glace, in her attempt to lift 'the curse of silence' (*SGB* 9) that has fallen on her daughter Erlene, describes the speechless body as one that is mapped like Certeau's city:

I placed before me a diagram of the human head neck and chest, drawn to scale, with the tunnels of speech and breath so gay in their scarlet lining; and ignoring the arrows darting from right and left to stab at the listed names of the blue and red and pink territory, I moved my finger,

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<sup>2</sup> 'When the agent and publisher received the typescript of *The Edge of the Alphabet*, the agents suggested I omit one chapter, the publishers that I enlarge the same chapter; there were other conflicting suggestions some of which I diffidently tried to follow' (*EMC* 138).

walked it along the corridor, trying to find the door into speech, but the diagram did not show it. (SGB 10)

This image can be read as a description of how 'the vast murmur of the everyday' of subjective experience — 'this cultural activity of the non-producers of culture, an activity that is unsigned, unreadable, and unsymbolized' (Certeau, *Practice*, xvii) — cannot be 'shown' on the map of assigned meaning. The place of struggle to find a voice for such activity is the territory of 'mystic speech' described by Certeau in the essay of that name from his collection *Heterologies*. This speech 'proliferates in proximity to a loss' (Certeau, *Heterologies*, 80) — imaged by Frame as incarceration, loss of agency, whether in the asylum or as 'captives of the captive dead' (EA 302) within a collective world-view that does not meet the needs of experience. In this sense, all are marginalised by available language, since it cannot articulate the 'everyday' of anyone. As Certeau reminds us, 'marginality is today no longer limited to minority groups, but is rather massive and pervasive' (Certeau, *Practice*, xvii).

For Certeau, the attempt to 'find our speech', then, marks a trajectory of desire, since, as he articulates using the words of St John of the Cross, "It is a difficult and troublesome thing for a soul not to understand itself or to find none who understand it" (Certeau, *Heterologies*, 88). To be signed, readable, symbolisable is a condition of being ceded existence — being 'understood' in the mapped world — and it is this longing which moves the unsigned body towards language, risking bestialisation or demonisation as it enters that polarised realm. In *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, Vera Glace describes the experience of this risk:

the book said, it may not be speech which emerges, it may only be a cry such as a bird makes or a beast lurking in the trees at night, or, loneliest of all, not the cry of a bird or beast but the first uttering of a new language which is understood by no one and nothing, and which causes

a smoke screen of fear to cloud the mind, as defense against the strangeness. (SGB 10)

Because sound can belong to the collective world of assigned meaning and it can also come from the world of the 'cry', it can be a vehicle like the *metaphorai*, the Greek buses and trains of the chapter 'Spatial Stories' in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, as Certeau asserts in making an often-noted point<sup>3</sup> regarding metaphor as vehicle in the construction of meaning. 'To go to work or come home, one takes a "metaphor"' (Certeau, *Practice*, 115). Sound establishes the principle of mobility, capable of making *and* of moving the boundaries of meaning, since 'boundaries are transportable limits and transportations of limits; they are also *metaphorai*' (Certeau, *Practice*, 129). We move ourselves if we can learn to hear and understand the cry as a 'first uttering'. But the 'smoke screen of fear' remains a problem. A practice is needed that can respond to this fear, a storying tactic that combines agility with mobility, moving in under the screen and away again before the firing starts, giving the experience of new language before resistance can be set up. The storyteller must slip around and under her own and others' fearful defences. In Frame's narratives, this is achieved by allowing the cry to emerge from the narrative from time to time, as a reminder of where language comes from. 'New language', when it is finally heard in *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, gives voice to the cry, what Derrida calls 'that which one has always excluded, pushing it into the area of animality or of madness' (Derrida, *Grammatology*, 166), or what Tessa Barringer in her Kristevan analysis of Frame's writing describes as 'a primal sound ... refusing to repress and deny her foundation in the primary processes of the *chora*' (Barringer 86):

Dr. Clapper ... moved nearer to catch the new language. He heard it clearly. "Ug-g-Ug. Ohhh Ohh g. Ugg." Out of ancient rock and marshland; out of ice and stone. (SGB 252)

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<sup>3</sup> For example, in Jacques Lacan, 'Agency of the letter in the unconscious', *Écrits*: 'metaphor occurs at the precise point at which sense emerges from non-sense, that is, at that frontier which, Freud discovered, when crossed the other way produces the word that in French is the word *par excellence*, the word that is simply the signifier "*esprit*"' (Lacan 158).



She begins to theorise a subjectivity characterised by *folding*, carried out in what she calls 'the caldron world of the witch-novelist' (AM 3). 'Pursuing or fleeing from an idea' (AM 4), experiments in subjective adaptation are carried out by identification with values and necessities of particular time-periods and places. Certeau's treatment of Freudian ideas of displacement<sup>4</sup> offers a way of thinking about this subjective tactic as an approach to 'using' available language:

"The user of a city picks out certain fragments of the statement in order to actualize them in secret."

He thus creates a discreteness, whether by making choices among the signifiers of the spatial "language" or by displacing them through the use he makes of them. He condemns certain places to inertia or disappearance and composes with others spatial "turns of phrase" that are "rare", "accidental" or illegitimate ... In the framework of enunciation, the walker constitutes, in relation to his position, both a near and a far, a here and a there. (Certeau, *Practice*, 99)

Features of Frame's writing contributing to an altered organisation of subjectivity as figured by Certeau are summarised by Bruce King (although characterised by him as part of a stylistic 'fault'):

organisation by theme and symbol rather than by linear narrative ordering, the events ... seem overcharged with obscure significances ... Frame often ... [uses] dashes ... linking elliptical comments in a manner suggestive of arbitrary mental associations' (King 117–18).

Semantic patternings of subjectivity, the activities of memory/imagination, based on a metonymy of desire — this *connects* with that — become the next vehicles, *metaphorai* which 'traverse and organize places; they select and link

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<sup>4</sup> Lacan, *Écrits*: "'displacement'" ... that veering off of signification that we see in metonymy, and which from its first appearance in Freud is represented as the most appropriate means used by the unconscious to foil censorship' (Lacan 160).



them together; they make sentences and itineraries' (Certeau, *Practice*, 115). In this sense memory/imagination performs the same function as Certeau's orality, characterised by the "returns and turns of voices" (Certeau, *Practice*, 156). Folds can be created in time/place, distant events may touch one another in space 'organised' by desire. As the narrator of *The Adaptable Man* puts it:

Human beings will forever imagine there is but one entrance and exit, when the years are perforated with them — rat holes, escape holes, doors to wonderland. (AM 56)

Echoing the Withers 'family' of responses to the constraints of available language, *The Adaptable Man* explores a 'family' of subjective states which attempt to claim some agency with regard to which linguistic structures they are surrounded by, organising themselves via chosen time/place identifications. The Maude family and their community, the East Anglian village of Little Burgelstatham are the instance of this subjective array, which includes identification with other times and places and with the present. They represent varieties of capitulation and resistance, just as the Withers family do, but in the context of a deliberate mocking of the murder-mystery genre.

The brothers, Aisley and Russell Maude, both identify with time/places conceived as antitheses of the present. The clergyman Aisley connects with a specific past and place: St Cuthbert's Anglo-Saxon Northumbria. Undergoing a crisis of faith, he experiences the terrifying non-specificity of a present where familiar meaning-structures have disappeared:

I perceived, as insects and men may, the immensity of space and sky uncovered, I felt a sense of loneliness, of changed destination, of confusion in the face of so much exposed time racing unexplained, unharnessed, as wind and cloud; finally I was overcome by a desire to return ... (AM 5)

Deciding to 'set himself in a lonely place as bait to attract the meaning of meaning' (AM 241), constructing a return in order to be 'rid of the troublesome terrifying years' (AM 77) His method of 'organisation' of subjectivity is to choose a time/place characterised by what he perceives as relative simplicity:

he has whittled away the world, the people, the land, the time, and because simplicity itself must have an end, he has arrived at himself, close to the first fluid world, the sea; he is inhabitant of an island, gazing through the grille of loneliness at the few curious observers — the sea, the marsh birds, two seals; he re-enacts the life of St Cuthbert. (AM 77-78)

Conversely Aisley's brother, Russell Maude, is in flight from too-specific experiences of 'this modern age':

war had acted on him like a drought, draining and parching. He had withered. Anticipation and satisfaction of pleasure, a spendthrift salt seminal energy, tears and tastes of pain, had been sucked up by fire-bombs burning like the sun. (AM 85)

His response is to search for a diffuse *not-present* that can be compared with the search of Certeau's mystic for 'a way to get lost' (Certeau, *Heterologies*, 80), becoming obsessed with the placelessness he can attain by following his interest in stamps of all nations, and with the enduring qualities of the teeth he cares for in his dentistry practice:

I don't have to hold conversations with the present or with posterity. I leave it to the teeth. They talk well enough without tongues or throat or face or flesh. Teeth from a million years past are still talking — and telling. (AM 87-88)

A third kind of resistance is that shown by the farmer, Vic Baldry, who rejects his surroundings in favour of a different place, rather than a different time or a moment outside time. Vic lives 'in a state of geographical bigamy' (AM 29) having visited and fallen in love with Australia, antithesis of 'English landscape' which

depressed him more and more; there was nothing to struggle against, there were no real mountains, no desert where a man could die of thirst and never be found; there was no room in England for a man to experience all the emotions that were part of his nature. (AM 165)

These three, then, offer a set of resistances and part-resistances, refusals to 'adapt', that correspond to the refusals and part-refusals of Daphne and Toby in the Withers family of *Owls Do Cry*, Toby (again) and Zoe in *The Edge of the Alphabet* and Erlene (as part of Vera) in *Scented Gardens for the Blind*.

Russell Maude's wife Greta and his son Alwyn, on the other hand, identify with the murderous, levelling uniformity of the present: 'an age in which genocide is the basis of survival' (AM 149). Disturbing influences, 'foreign bodies', human or otherwise, must be exterminated, here and now. Greta's focus is on the garden:

to the cultivation of vegetables and fruit she brought as much modern knowledge and scientific technique as she could acquire. Her garden became her compensation for not being able to "modernize" Russell. (AM 85)

It was comforting to return to a chartered world where the enemies could be located, stalked, and destroyed. (AM 129)

Alwyn's adaptation to his time consists in an extreme identification with the same spiritual and emotional 'draining and parching' from which his uncles

are in flight. He demonstrates this identification by killing the migrant worker Botti Julio:

someone whom he did not know, whom he had never seen in his life before, whom he neither loved nor hated; a man whose only qualification for being murdered was that he belonged to the human race. (AM 149)

The novel explores its characters' subjective 'adaptations' to the meaning-system of their own time and place in terms of the 'singular' sets of connections they make. Each choice in response to experience creates its own fold in time-place. Russell and Aisley Maude and Vic Baldry bring what is distant into contact with the present by direct identification. Greta and Alwyn Maude are presented, because of their identification with the here-and-now, as inhabitants of a two-dimensional realm of scarecrow figures, 'the grotesque race ... a man-made shape of men ... crimson aluminium foil ... men without bodies ... whirling faster and faster to satisfy their deprived senses' (AM 14). But even they summon the past by excluding it. Reorganisation of space into sentences of desire brings a radically altered experience of relation with the other, since any act of negative desire is also a summoning of what is rejected, like the chattering thoughts of a Zen novice in search of 'no mind'.

Death solves nothing. An exterminated race is not a vanished race; an assassinated ruler does not cease to exercise power. These are commonplaces, but men everywhere continue to equate killing with getting rid of ... Botti Julio persists. (AM 149)

In *The Adaptable Man*, some possibility of agency, some mobility of subjective identification is hinted at. Frame makes it clear, however, that insofar as this mobility is motivated by a desire to exclude the available language of certain times and places, it will always fail. The next novel, *A State of Siege* (1966), takes up this idea of the impossibility of subjectivity predicated on exclusion. The title of *A State of Siege* describes the result of its

main character's attempt to shut out from her life everyone and everything she has known. Malfred Signal, fifty-three years old, painter, art teacher in the town of Matuatangi in the South Island of New Zealand, retires to the 'paradise' island of Karemoana off the coast of the North Island, having nursed her mother through a last illness. Her move is conceived as 'a pilgrimage against her nature and her family, especially against her family' (SS 5), in order to make possible the construction of 'her own "view" set against the measuring standards not of the eye but of the "room two inches behind the eyes"' (SS 8):

It was only the night her mother was dying that she realised what she had missed seeing by her dutiful habit of looking. (SS 16)

'Seeing' according to the 'New View' (SS 19) involves the construction and articulation of a visual language that does not simply repeat given formulations, but includes the experience of the seer:

She'd painted the plains, from sight and from memory, and people had admired her paintings. Yet she knew, now, that in none of her paintings had she ever described the way the plains submitted, a world without walls save for the western, dark blue rim of distance, to the invasion of light and air and snow-coloured water. (SS 17)

The hope of finding this way of seeing figures a hope for the possibility of tactical 'use', in Certeau's terms, of available linguistic constructions of experience, just as the 'new language' of earlier novels does. Just as Aisley and Russell Maude did, Malfred hopes that the New View will be achievable if she can attain subjective agency by choosing a time/place uncontaminated by customary ways of seeing.

The novel traces Malfred's first days on the island, following her as she settles into her house and begins to orient herself to the island's light and weather, constructing the framework of a life that can support her New View, a process

which culminates on the fifth day in a sensation of readiness to begin painting. The explicit connection between the passing of Malfred's days on the island and the days of creation in the book of Genesis is pointed out by Gina Mercer, with reference to one of the typescript versions of *A State of Siege*:

On the afternoon of the fifth day Malfred (*counting her days on the island as the prophets had counted the days of creation*) felt at the tips of her fingers the urge that came when she needed to paint (Mercer, *Janet Frame*, 117)

As well as representing, as Mercer suggests, a godlike creative decision to '[fill] the sea with life' (Mercer, *Janet Frame*, 118) on the biblical day of creation of sea-creatures and birds, Malfred's choice of the fifth day can also be read as arising from her understanding that one of the conditions of agency is that her re-creation of the world must exclude/preclude humans:

The land is all I need ... We are so few in this country. It is the land that is our neighbour, the rivers, the sea, the bush that we have loved as ourselves. My duty ... is to paint what I see, and since my land is sparsely populated there'll be no intrusion of people into my scenes. Fifty-three is a ripe enough age to put aside entanglements with the human family. (SS 23)

When she begins to paint, though, she is appalled to realise that the New View is to consist in the 'impulse' to re-present her human history to herself in ways that are terrifying in their unfamiliarity. Attempting a seascape she is compelled to incorporate elements of her past, mixing with the paint a tube of lanolin left over from the time of her mother's illness. The 'remembered horror' (SS 47) of that time contaminates the work, despite the fact that, as she tells herself, 'There are no people in my painting. No one could make out ... the arm of someone being drawn under by the waves' (SS 47). This passage, which recalls the 'glimpse in the water of a white face or a moving limb' (FW 150) that haunts Istina Mavet in *Faces in the Water* as she considers the fate

of those who do not survive the Still Life of the asylum, reminds us that to walk in the city of language is always to make sentences with what is available, what has gone before, to renew by reordering, and that to walk there is also always to walk in company. To attempt to repress existing structures is to relinquish all hope of incorporating them with some degree of agency. Once excised from her life, the difficulty and horror of Malfred's connection with her 'human family' is experienced as an attribute of the formerly benign natural world. To emphasise this state of affairs, on the fifth night, a storm comes, 'a hurling weight, attacking ... the house, a being whose harsh breath could be felt and heard' (SS 49).

*A State of Siege* articulates a recognition that repression of available language does not offer a reprieve any more than repression of imagination does. The two merely offer differing models of human subjectivity; the latter experienced as an inability to break free of confining structures, the former as an inability to create and maintain any stable sheltering structure at all. The latter is figured by Frame through a series of characters (Daphne, Toby, Istina, Zoe, Erlene) who have a sense of their own reality, even if without agency. The former are figured by characters who have so surrendered their own sense of the world that the centre of imaginative selfhood is experienced as existing outside them in menacing form, either through the existence of mad, 'resistant' or otherwise threatening characters, (Teresa, Pat, the Maudes) or, like Malfred, in the form of a humanised nature. To the storm outside Malfred's house is added 'a sound, a swishing as of footsteps on grass, and a thunderous determined knocking on the back door' (SS 50) that could be, as she tells herself, '*Anyone from Anywhere*' (SS 58). Throughout the night, this indeterminate assault or supplication continues, creating conditions in which people and places of her life suggest themselves relentlessly.

Recognition of the conditions of a New View comes to Malfred: in moments of quiet between bursts of sound, the storm and the knocking make possible a 'new, first silence, emerging from emptiness, from nothingness' (SS 129). Into this silence, the New View returns as new language, as-yet-incomprehensible,

breaking the siege, the distinction between inside and outside, silence and sound, the need 'to keep the storm out, to keep the storm in' (SS 82). Its breakthrough, when it comes, takes the form of a stone thrown through the window, wrapped in paper on which is written a message in an unknown but almost-decipherable tongue:

Scrawled across the print, in red crayon, were the words, Help Help.

She read the news that was not in any language she had learned:

*Soltrin, carmew, desse puniform wingering brime  
commiern in durmp, a farom a ferinwise lumner*

...

*O in ambertime*

*cloudprime*

*who and done*

*whone, whone.*

... Three mornings later, when they found her, both her hand and the stone held fast in her hand were ice-cold; she was dead. (SS 197–99)

Recognition comes to Malfred as the death of her hope for a new subjectivity, New View, new language based on repression of existing structures. Self and the experience of its other are folded together in such a complex way — in time, place, memory/imagination — that they must be experienced as a whole. Frame as masker-storyteller has smuggled in the experience of the other as a function of self. Recognition and reprieve offered by the agency of the fold is followed by further recognition that in the process of creating the fold, contiguous surfaces of self and other undergo the same transformation.

The message on the newspaper is overwritten by the words 'Help Help', underlining the mutuality of the folding process. Not only does Malfred seek to approach a new subjectivity, but the constructing principle of language itself seeks 'help' too, in a movement reminiscent of that described by the Sufi ecstatic Rumi: 'Not only, the thirsty seeks the water, but, the water seeks the thirsty'. In this sense Malfred does fulfil the promise of the redemptive



imagery described by Ruth Brown: 'On the third day, Christ rose again: after three days, the artist (Malfred) is found dead, but the artist (someone) lives' (Brown 56). From the beginning, in the novels, this longing for redemption is attributed to a world trapped within the constructions of available language — in *Owls Do Cry* Chicks/Teresa writes in her diary that Daphne 'sends back the letter I wrote her, and has written the words Help help help at the end of my letter. As if I had to be rescued' (*ODC* 101). The call for redemption of the constructed world is figured again in Frame's most recent novel, *The Carpathians* (1988), in which occupants of the virtual realm of a computer game repeat the cry:

a stick figure darted to and fro on the screen dodging bullets and, when struck, falling apparently dead while a new stick figure sprang from the corpse to begin its life of dodging bullets, and now and then, deadly rays and pen-size missiles ... the stick figure waiting to be shot at began dancing up and down and letting out a cry with each leap, 'Help, help, help!' (*TC* 46)

The next novel, *Yellow Flowers in the Antipodean Room* (1968) published in New Zealand as *The Rainbirds*,<sup>5</sup> examines how/whether it is possible to survive such a death/rebirth into new subjectivity, new language. The Frame I'm writing, Frame the survivor, says to herself, as she writes *A State of Siege*, 'Yes yes, entry into the New View is a death, death of what has gone before, but we're talking about going on, here: what's it like, life after this death? What are the conditions under which new life is possible?'

The central character of *Yellow Flowers in the Antipodean Room*, Godfrey Rainbird, is a young Englishman who emigrates to New Zealand, where 'his skin would not be so pale and there would not be as much rain as in the Trossachs where he spent the war years as an evacuee' (*YF* 3). He marries a New Zealand girl and has two children with her. One night, as he is walking home from a meeting, he is hit by a car and killed. His wife Beatrice arranges

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<sup>5</sup> A working title that was superseded in later editions.

his funeral and has a grave dug for him. Everyone — wife, children, extended family and friends — accommodate themselves to the fact of his death, but after thirty-six hours, Godfrey awakens from what has in fact been a 'deathlike coma' (YF 39). When he wakes, his experience of the world and others' experience of him is entirely changed. Not only does he have to deal with involuntary possession by 'the idea of burial alive' (YF 59), but with being 'the source of all this inconvenience and turmoil' (YF 72) to those around him. People are horrified, envious, curious, repelled by Godfrey, who has become a living reminder of the reality of death/transformation. *Yellow Flowers* is an octave, a resonator with *Faces in the Water* — here are the structures, not of the asylum, but of everyday life from which new language comes and within which it has to exist. *Yellow Flowers* describes the near-absolute resistance to an altered way of being, both from the one who has undergone transformation, and from those around.

Godfrey becomes fixated by the idea that he could have been buried alive (YF 59ff), by the real possibility that transformation can be misinterpreted, and the transformed one relegated to a living death, in the asylum like Daphne and Istina, or in silence like Erlene/Vera, or in the grave-like 'antipodean room', quarter-acre home of the 'Family Group 1964. Fleet Drive, Anderson's Bay, the last house facing the harbour' (YF 8). In a discussion of what he calls 'the art of frustrated momentum' (Harris 94) in *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, Wilson Harris describes a 'sense of being stifled' that is 'implicit in categories of waste ... in the late twentieth century world', and which can be understood as 'a new suppressed emotion and remedial dimension' (Harris 94). The passage he cites from *Scented Gardens* is one in which Vera Glace describes the way in which

When people moved ... they left their shape in air, as if they had been wearing the air as clothing ... one struggles out of air because always it fits too tightly, ever since the first tight squeeze of it zipped into the lungs at the first breath, pinching at the tongue and the throat ... from the

first moment of living the air does not fit, it has just not been made to measure ... the intransigent shape of air. (SGB 17)

Godfrey, too, in an attempt to 'suppress' the sense of being stifled by a 'pressing until a man's chest unable to rise in breathing caves in' (YF 60), becomes obsessed for a time with keeping still: 'I must keep my footing, he said to himself, not moving, not daring to move' (YF 89). Eventually, however, he is forced into a realisation that he has 'moved' irrevocably, so that he no longer conforms to the subjectivity he once experienced as having the transparency of air: 'Even if I went in search of my old self and found it I could not wear it; it would not fit' (YF 112). He loses his job at the tourist office — 'Who wants their annual holiday booked by a former corpse?' (YF 138) and is forced into the 'remedial dimension' of the 'fight to keep his share of space' (YF 141) having created it. He does this by means of a reconstruction of the 'air' of available language. At first in his dreams, and then in waking life, the 'icy spelling' (YF 157) of things begins to come to him, showing him 'the word and its lining' (YF 159), as in the case of a letter from Lance Galbraith, his employer at the tourist office, giving formal notice of dismissal:

DEAR MR. BRAINRID,

I hope that you will tundersad our tatty-duty in the rine-test of crustomes, the revalting public. The vents of the salt week have made it no longer sopplible for me to plomey you. We golopsea for nay envi-conscience we may accuse you, and as saw derangar we have given you in lieu of oncite a moth's gawes, a drunhed nopuds; sola a re-re-fence that may help in your lip-placation for another sopition.

With grate greter at soling an inconsectionous and killed rememb of our fafts, I merain

yours failfulthy,

LANCE BRAGTHAIL

How peculiar, Godfrey thought. It reads more truthfully in the cold spelling. A hundred pounds is indeed a moth's jaws to help us face the wolf at the door.

(YF 160–61)

The only work Godfrey is able to find is a job that he does at home, assembling plugs for electric appliances. His children are removed from the family by welfare authorities; his wife becomes an alcoholic and eventually kills herself. In this 'journey through the lives' of the Rainbirds, what constitutes likeness across the 'family group' (YF 8) and the social world of which they are a microcosm is a stifling resistance to change. In a bitter joke, the storyteller seems to suggest via the work's title that the only 'room', the only space to be found in the novel's New Zealand, is experienced as a grave planted with 'yellow and gold flowers ... [to] help with your dreams' (YF 247–48). This 'dead room' like Daphne's room in *Owls Do Cry* is constructed in conditions under which, like Zoe Bryce of *The Edge of the Alphabet*, one can 'create ... but no one sees' (EA 271). Such a bleak response may be influenced, as Gina Mercer suggests, by Frame's recent return to New Zealand, 'the scene of the crime' (Frame, *Landfall*, 241), from Europe where she had found adequate 'space for writing, and where the diagnosis of schizophrenia 'threatening her freedom ... had been overturned' (Mercer, *Janet Frame*, 123). Frame wrote *Yellow Flowers* during a university writing fellowship in Dunedin, where she had last been 'a waitress at the Grand' (Frame, *Landfall*, 241). Mercer argues that

no longer at the mercy of others, either as the "little serving-maid" ... or as the madwoman in the attic ... Frame ... is powerful in her satiric criticism of the "criminal" culture, so reactively punitive toward those who dare to remind it of the possibility of alternative realities, such as death. (Mercer, *Janet Frame*, 125)

This, then, may be the context to Frame's answer, in *Yellow Flowers*, to the question she begs by her conclusion to *A State of Siege*, regarding what are

the circumstances in which new life is lived after the death of subjective change, an answer that seems to be 'Yes, life goes on, but under great adversity, which will eventually drive it to seal itself off from the rest of the world'.

The next novel, *Intensive Care* (1970), as has been noted throughout the literature (see for example Dupont 149; Evans, *Janet Frame*, 176; Mercer, *Janet Frame*, 153; Panny, *I Have What I Gave*, 109), follows the thread of life-after-deathly-change through the lives of generations of the Livingstone family in an exploration of how such 'criminal' resistance and denial comes about and is reinforced over time. This pursuit adds a diachronic dimension to the synchronic 'family' studies of subjective patterning in the earlier novels. What are the predetermining factors, Frame seems to be asking, that dictate how we will walk in the city of language? War, mental and physical illness, love — all these are examined as sources of profound transformation which leave those who have undergone them unable to continue living within meaning-structures constituted by the language of the 'family group', and predisposing them to impose their own pattern of response on those who come after them. Echoing Daphne's voice in *Owls Do Cry*, a chorus-like commentary by the book's narrator-character reiterates the entropic pattern of resistance by which all experience that does not fit the 'family' mould is relegated to the world of 'dream', shut out of consciousness, placed outside the possibility of articulation.

Tom Livingstone goes from New Zealand to fight in WWI, where he is wounded, and during convalescence falls in love with his nurse, Cissy Everest. His return to New Zealand and to his wife Eleanor, whom he married just before going to war, is a literal attempt to leave behind the transformation he has undergone. Like Godfrey Rainbird, he expects, and is expected, to 'forget it all' (YF 106). What ensues is a life determined by the return of repressed trauma and love, 'a passion ... for Ciss Everest alias the War' (IC 4) which takes the form of hatred and contempt for his wife and random cruelty towards his children, Pearl and Naomi. In a parallel story, his brother

Leonard, who also fights in the war in Europe, never manages to make a viable life for himself 'back home', and exists in a kind of half-world of reminiscence where everything significant to him — love, posterity — exists in the dream that is France:

He claimed to have 'a son in France' as a relic from a love affair with a French girl during the First World War. 'I should have stayed in France,' he used to say. 'It's love rules the world; love is the only hope.' He never married ... (IC 69)

The next generation is formed in the atmosphere of these denials of experience. The adult life of Tom's daughter Pearl is ruled by her own need to forget the violence to which she has been subjected: 'She seldom thought about her own childhood. Her past, Naomi's past, was done with, dead, dead, dead, dead' (IC 100). Her inability to construct a world in memory — to live the anguish of finding language for what has happened to her — results in the return of the repressed, experienced as a rebellion of the world of family and of her own body as part of that world:

After the birth of her son, Colin, Pearl grew fat and fatter and fatter ... She who as a child dreamed of becoming a dancer had been exiled from her body ... she erupted [bitterness and resentment] like a fountain or volcano, upon her husband and child and neatly proportioned foursquare home ... She could control the house.... decorating, redecorating were her passion ... She would look through the arrow-slit windows of her castle of flesh, feeling herself trapped, besieged, as any creature might who has undergone a transformation and cannot make its explaining voice heard ... She felt she wanted to recover, restore, redecorate the world ... (IC 97–100)

A generation on, Colin's attempts to evade the experiences of his own childhood have even more disastrous effects. Immersed in the structures of the family group, his transformation comes through passionate love:

Colin was still a junior partner in an accounting firm; he had not made the fortune he had hoped for when he resolved to make money his profession. Eleven years married, a wife, children, member of the Cricket Club, the Rate-Payers' Association, the Parent-Teachers' Association; and now alone, dreaming of Lorna Kimberley. (IC 168)

Leaving everything familiar to live with Lorna, he is unable to find or create any meaning for himself when she tires of him and retreats into the formulaic world of her parents:

'It's true what Mum and Dad say, I *am* only a kid. You know yourself we've been a bit wild ... And of course we're tired of each other now. I'd better go straight home as Mum and Dad want.' (IC 172)

Colin shoots Lorna and her parents and then kills himself.

Within the social order represented in *Intensive Care*, family is identified both figuratively-synchronically (as in the other novels) and literally-diachronically (offering a genealogy of resistance) as the defining unit of an enforcing mechanism by which a static world view is imposed via rigid language structures. It works by offering individuals a sense of connection with others and threatening the loss of this connection, while at the same time isolating them from the possibility of analysing their experience in terms of a wider collective, insisting that 'a man's life [is] contained only within its span and not bearing its own responsibilities towards yesterday and tomorrow' (IC 168). It denies as 'dream' and renders inarticulate all experience of the affective and imaginative motivations that impel members of a society as they go about their lives.

The final section of *Intensive Care* points to the collective consequences of this position. At a moment in an apocalyptic future, we are given a scenario in which legislation is enacted ordering the legal murder of those unable or

unwilling to relinquish the world of 'dream'. Living on the site of the old Livingstone house, Milly Galbraith is unable to conform physically and intellectually because of her 'dull-normal' status, and unwilling to comply with the constructions of experience imposed on her by available language:

Milly was the kind of person whom at first ones does not 'see' as one usually sees and places the members of a family ... a creature emerged like a rabbit or hedgehog or elf to exist in a moment of twilight, perhaps, with plants and animals, as if that were the only time allowed it. (IC 222-23)

Unlike the 'cold spelling' that comes to Godfrey Rainbird involuntarily, Milly's use of 'special spelling' is a deliberate subversion:

I wanted my own language, for if you have your own language nobody can take it away from you. (IC 238)

... no one in the world is going to know my experience unless I tell it and I wanted to use my special spelling to make the words show up for what they really are the cruel deceivers. (IC 243)

Milly is condemned to death on the 'Deciding Day' fixed by the 'Human Delineation Act' which determines who will be classified as human and who is defective and therefore regarded as animal. Her journals survive her, however, and like the 'songs' of Daphne in *Owls Do Cry*, her voice persists as witness to a possibility.

From the time of the first escape, 'turning to' the complicating folds of fiction, protecting and protected by them, the storyteller has been 'trying out' effects, playing with edges, elaborating her dance. There is daring and necessity in the steps by which she proceeds, defying the authorities, creating a breathing space out of the substance of her own marginality, for, as a character in *Intensive Care* says:



women have so many secret pockets and undiscovered ravines, the government never dreamed. If protests arise, I thought, they will come from the women ... these pleated females with their folds and tucks and creases — some part of their lives will never be cleaned away. (IC 217)

In the process, she has incorporated the movement of everyday subjectivity, the sounds of conversation and self-talk, in the layout of the city of signs; as Certeau puts it, 'marking in language the fragmented and unexpected return (like the intrusion of voices from outside) of oral' (or remembered/imagined) 'relationships that are structuring but' — and here I add *usually* — 'repressed by the written' (Certeau, *Practice*, 156).

The novels to date have been a series of meditations on coming to terms with the necessity for subjective death, at first experienced as a brutal experiential reality of imprisonment within an impossibly constraining 'city plan' of language — a bewildering death-sentence (*Owls Do Cry*, *Faces in the Water*), then recognised as resulting from complicity with one's own construction in language — perhaps one held the key all along (*The Edge of the Alphabet*, *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, *The Adaptable Man*), then recognised as a point of transformation and actively sought out (*A State of Siege*). *Yellow Flowers* and *Intensive Care* reflect on the conditions under which subjective transformation occurs — that of persecution by the city fathers. The novels have surveyed the strictures of available language and explored both internal (self-disciplinary) and external (social-familial) conditions that conspire to enforce them. Complication of subjectivity — a folding that smuggles in the experience of the new/other as a function of self — has been identified as a way through 'the smoke screen of fear' that arises as a result of any attempt to challenge the status quo. Milly Galbraith's voice as a written presence signals a move towards making this explicit: from now on the novels have storytellers, those wilful incorporators of otherness, as central characters. Published two years after *Intensive Care*, *Daughter Buffalo* (1972) has a pair of writer-characters who double the uncertainty around whose 'point of view' we are getting, since it is unclear who is the fiction of whom. Talbot Edelman,

doctor who works at (and later becomes Head of Department of) Death Studies in New York; and the old man, Turnlung, are both engaged in acquiring and recording a 'death education' (DB 21) — Edelman because he comes from a family which by 'unspoken mutual agreement kept [death] at a safe distance' (DB 8), and Turnlung because his own death is imminent — he has come to New York from New Zealand 'to take a closer look at death. My own death' (DB 20), making a 'voyage to this country where death appears to be more important than life' (DB 28). Here is a point where transformation in and of the city of language — in this case, literally the New York of Certeau's 'Walking in the City' — becomes a lovers' dance of death. Not only is the relationship between writer and written figured as indeterminate — each character writes the other — it is enacted in this novel as a love affair between the two men. The novel *dances* language through the smoke screen, moves it through a series of spaces, disguises, selves, refusing to allow it to settle.

Turnlung can be understood as an elaboration by Frame of her understanding, at this point in her writing life, of the principle of writing subjectivity. He is, as Jeanne Delbaere describes him, a Tiresias figure, an 'all-inclusive consciousness who has foresuffered all, can enter emotionally into the lives of others and foresees the future' (Delbaere 173). That this inclusiveness is enacted in and through language is made clear by Turnlung's characterisation of himself as someone who, from childhood, has been obsessed by words. After his first meeting with Edelman as potential lover — a visit to the reptile hall of the Natural History Museum — Turnlung explains that what kept 'recurring vividly' were 'the words, the names ... *Testitudines crocodylia, rhynchocephalia, squamata, sauria, serpentes*' (DB 91). These names which 'repeated one after the other came to sound like an ancient prayer for the earliest forms of life' (DB 91) can be read in connection with Frame's 'fascination' with 'synecdoche and metonymy — the part for the whole, the whole for the part' (McLeod 25). Among the listed orders of variously plated and scaled creatures, all have representative species worldwide apart from the rhynchocephalia, which are uniquely associated with Turnlung's home country. This ancient order has only one living representative, the New Zealand

tuatara, a 'living dinosaur' which retains as its inheritance down unimaginable distances of time a rudimentary third eye, a pineal gland covered by a thin layer of skin, which may still, it is thought, be capable of a form of sight.

Turnlung, then, old tuatara, can be understood to stand 'for the whole' of the 'earliest form' of motivation for writing, taking up the search begun by Aisley Maude, 'ecclesiastical dinosaur' (AM 33) of *The Adaptable Man*, for 'somewhere in time and place ... where he could put his third eye to profitable use without submitting to its being blinded by an unwanted growth of temporal skin' (AM 33).<sup>6</sup> The writer engaged in the dance of subjective death 'sees through', that is, sees across, the suffering that necessitates writing, the transformations it brings about, and the resistances it meets. *Daughter Buffalo* manages both to create an experience of subjective indeterminacy as condition of finding new language, outwitting inner and outer resistances to change, and to create an embodiment in the figure of Turnlung, of motivations for the dance. This capacity to fold space and time imaginatively is figured in both *The Adaptable Man* and *Daughter Buffalo* as rhythmic movement, a migration. In *The Adaptable Man* the desire is thwarted or misdirected in a way that is, the narrator says, 'enough to make a man mad with the thought that he is not a migratory bird' (AM 4). By the time Turnlung emerges in *Daughter Buffalo*, he is able to speak from 'a Sanctuary ... of the wildernesses where the wild birds go' (DB 180).

Only after having practised and *practised on* readers an experience of danced linguistic space — its escapes, disruptions, appearances and disappearances — only then, in the tenth novel, *Living in the Maniototo* (1979), after a break of seven years, is the storyteller ready to start 'telling *about* [this] movement' (Certeau, *Practice*, 81: my italics), naming the technologies of storytelling. Till now, Frame has used writing about writers as a self-reflexive praxis, a process by which available language 'lets [voices] out and they interrupt it'

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<sup>6</sup> *The Adaptable Man*, like *Daughter Buffalo*, has its litany/spell of transportation to what Patrick Evans call the 'origins of both language and place' (Evans, *Meanjin*, 379): 'Little Burgelstatham ... Tydd. Lakenthorpe. Murston. Segham. Colsea. Withigford. Say the names again and again, and soon ... there's nothing but a dream of earliest praise' (AM 12–13).

(Certeau, *Practice*, 156). *Living in the Maniototo* presents the experience of writing subjectivity itself as a site of multiplicity, and for this reason it is a pivotal work, renewing subjective experiences constructed in the earlier novels, and anticipating the autobiographical self-constructions to come. Writing subjectivity as it is presented in *Living in the Maniototo* informs the work of 'Chapter Five: Poems from the Maniototo'. In Certeau's terms *Living in the Maniototo* uses the 'returns and turns of voices' as a 'means by which discourse proliferates' (Certeau, *Practice*, 156) within the narrative. From this understanding Frame can allow a voice to say:

I am Violet Pansy Proudlock, an expert in near, near-distant and distant ventriloquism, for which I use my talking stick and my pocket head with all available fitments ... but my real artistry is in daring to enter the speech of another ... I have "turned to" ventriloquism. I am also Alice Thumb. I have "turned to" eavesdropping and gossip. (LM 13)

Her central character has multiple identities whose stories exist and modify one another both synchronically and diachronically as they trace her life as a writer and her movements between New Zealand and North America. The effect of this multiplicity is described by Brian Massumi in his discussion of 'late-capitalist ... image/expression events' in which we bathe':

interruption ... the fast cut ... [creating] affective 'atoms' that ... are autonomous, not through closure but through a singular openness. As unbounded 'regions' in an equally unbounded affective field, they are in contact with the whole universe of affective potential, as by action at a distance. Thus they have no outside, even though they are differentiated according to which potentials are most apt to be expressed (effectively induced) as their 'region' passes into actuality. (Massumi 234–35)

In *Living in the Maniototo*, Frame constructs an image for the experience of continual subjective modification that is both activity and product of storying speech, calling it 'the manifold'. It is from this place, Frame's narrator(s)

suggest in *Living in the Maniototo*, that new language is generated, its qualities having the complexities and opacities of the everyday, the cadences of orality, of eavesdropped gossip in the storying activities of memory/imagination. What it produces and contains is *ventri loquis*, speech from the folded spaces of the belly or womb. *Habitus* and habitation, practice and structure, the advent of manifold subjectivity in language is paradoxical, both a founding creative act, godlike, and the formation of what Frame describes as a 'replica', *re-plicare*, a refolding of given material, like the Leibnizean 'soul' that is a 'production' or 'result' of 'the world that God has chosen', a 'monad [that] includes every series of the states of the world' (Deleuze, *The Fold*, 26):

There are some insects that carry a bulge of seed outside their body as the intelligence of the universe carries its planets and stars. A spider has its milky house strung *fragilely* between two stalks of grass; and so God has pitched his worlds; and we who are replicas and live in the house of replicas cannot exist until we have shaped what we have discovered within the manifold (LM 117-18)

A 1972 poem from a series of religious sonnets by New Zealand poet and Frame contemporary James Baxter<sup>7</sup> figures the enclosed spider's nest (to be seen everywhere in long grass at the edge of summer paddocks in New Zealand)<sup>8</sup> as an 'aerial castle'<sup>9</sup> (Baxter 564), a figuration summoning Teresa

<sup>7</sup> Baxter's first collection of poems, *Beyond the Palisade*, is singled out by Frame in the second volume of her autobiography, *An Angel at My Table* as one of the first works bringing to her awareness the fact that there was such a thing as New Zealand literature. (AMT 67)

<sup>8</sup> The nursery web spider, *Dolomedes minor*, carries its ball of eggs with it for up to five weeks in spring and early summer before building a nest for the newly hatched spiderlings in scrub, long grass or sedges of the lowlands or in the tips of highland tussocks. (Forster 96)

<sup>9</sup> The spider crouching on the ledge above the sink  
 Resembles the tantric goddess,  
 At least as the Stone Age people saw her  
 And carved her on their dolmens. Therefore I don't kill her,  
 Though indeed there is a simpler reason,  
 Because she is small. Kehua, vampire, eight-eyed watcher  
 At the gate of the dead, little Arachne, I love you  
 Though you hang your cobwebs up like dirty silk in the hall  
 And scuttle under the mattress. Remember I spared your children  
 In their cage of white cloth you made as an aerial castle,  
 And you yourself, today, on the window ledge.  
 Fear is the only enemy. Therefore when I die,  
 And you wait for my soul, you hefty as a king crab  
 At the door of the underworld, let me pass in peace. (Sonnet 48 *Autumn Testament*)

of Avila's 'interior castle'. As Certeau points out in his essay 'Mystic Speech', the figure of interior castle 'illustrates the imaginary, formal schema that is common to so many mystics' (Certeau, *Heterologies*, 94), and where 'despite "how strictly cloistered you are ... you can enter ... and walk about ... at any time without asking leave from your superiors"' (Certeau, *Heterologies*, 95). Frame's continuation of her imaging of the manifold describes it as 'a wild bees' nest'<sup>10</sup> (LM 118) variously 'attended' and 'avoided' throughout lives that construct themselves as existing 'within' it, or as having it 'hanging' as a separate entity within them. A writer's relationship to it is like that of

a solitary carpenter bee, [who] will hoard scraps from the manifold and then proceed to gnaw obsessively, constructing a long gallery, nesting her very existence within her food. The eater vanishes. The characters in the long gallery emerge. (LM 134)

Frame's figure — brain-womb-belly-machine, irreducibly multiple and complex, fecund, maximising surface area in confinement — has these resonances too, as it constructs a subjective city *in language* where there is freedom 'to enter and walk about', as part of the story's own 'science of fables' (Certeau, *Practice*, 156). Frame is theorising and enacting an escape without leaving, a way through for the 'banished children of Eve' exiles of a culture of the Mirror Stage. Mavis/Alice/Violet, a shifting "'shifter" [that] ... confirms the "objectivity of the text" ... and designates the reason for and the content of the discourse' (Certeau, *Heterologies*, 94) talks her way right into the moving heart of the 'Ideal-I'. Through the image of the Manifold, Frame offers a site which can be read as re-theorising a model of subjectivity exemplified by the Freudian/Lacanian psychoanalytic approach, and, as Patrick West suggests, she does this in terms of her own cultural/historical

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<sup>10</sup> This conflation of predation/foraging (as in the arachnid/insect spider/bee image) resonates with figurations found elsewhere in Frame relating to the operations of language: 'language in its widest sense is the hawk suspended above eternity, feeding from it but not of its substance and not necessarily for its life and thus never able to be translated into it; only able by a wing movement, so to speak, a cry, a shadow, to hint at what lies beneath it on the untouched, undescribed almost unknown plain' (LM 43). I will discuss this understanding of language in Chapter Two via Deleuze and Guattari's theorisation of art as an approach to chaos.

experience. Lists of consumer items that appear throughout the text are 'locations ... where the linguistic sign stands only for itself' (West 92) and as such provide examples of Frame's 'attempts to "write the Real" in the precise terms of New Zealand's postcolonial placement' (West 93).<sup>11</sup>

By making an image such as that of the Manifold, the storyteller begins to understand the shapes and directions of narrative desire, to find out where she is going; what 'occasion' has been gathering across the whole trajectory of a body of work. And what emerges is that the occasion, the next moment to be seized, is the articulation of a self. As Violet Pansy Proudlock (or Alice Thumb, or Mavis Furness, Mavis Barwell, Mavis Halleton — 'I've buried two husbands') puts it,

I hope to progress from stick to pocket head to person, real person, not stick person or pocket person. I have a task to perform. (LM 13)

This is the 'task' of the process of writing, the elaboration of a self, in a movement that traces a subjective shift from exclusive identification with either the stuck, punishing, 'stick' world of available language or with the confining, secret 'pocket' world of imagination, to an incorporation of both in the 'Real' complexities of the manifold. Neither slavishly following the street plan nor lost in a wordless maze, but dancing in the streets of the city of language. Having 'journeyed through' multiple lives, having 'buried' many 'superiors' in a process of recognition and reprieve, the storyteller is free at last to 'perform' her own life, for herself, as member of a collective to/(be)fore whom she is able to speak.

The next stories to appear, then, are three volumes of autobiography — *To the Is-Land* (1983), *An Angel at My Table* (1983) and *The Envoy from Mirror City* (1984) — whose experiences are constructed, as Frame describes it, via

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<sup>11</sup> The concept of the Lacanian 'Real' as used by West draws on Kristeva's essay 'The True-Real'. West argues that 'Kristeva is unable/unwilling to distinguish between the Real as identical with the semiotic *chora*, and, the Real as a pure type of linguistic indicator present only in the syntactic and phonemic units of language' (West 89).

the agency of a centripetal force, a 'whirlpool' that that presents memories, takes them in and re-presents them:

... they whirl, propelled by a force beneath, with different memories rising to the surface at different times ... and with some staying forever beneath the surface ... the movement is dance with its own pattern ... that the writer, trying to write an autobiography, clings to in one moment only. (*TIL* 161)

A major project of Frame's fiction is articulating the motivation of this dance, and a major marker of the achievement of her writing practice is the transformation of the choreographer from a figure that can only be called 'Insanity' (*FW* 90) through the construction of a writing subjectivity consciously aligned with the necessity for challenge to available language. This project leads into a telling of self as narrative — a necessary 'task' that declares both the motivation of the dance and the possibility of its execution. The manner in which Frame chooses to perform it is worthy of her master-trickster status. The language and narrative structure of these stories of autobiography is different from everything that has come before: they are linear, told chronologically in a beautiful prose style that Frame has avoided in the preceding novels as a way of drawing attention to the system of signs, or as Milly Galbraith, 'doll-normal' victim of available language in *Intensive Care* puts it, 'to make the words show up for what they really are the cruel deceivers' (*IC* 243). But beware; every occasion of the three volumes is nuanced, altered radically by a shorting-out that occurs when the folds of this re-plica touch those of the novels, their versions and references. As Simon Petch suggests with reference to Frame's quotations of her own poems in the volumes of autobiography, 'Frame's texts function in her autobiography as a narrative language that is unique to herself' (Petch 64). This observation can be extended to the whole body of her work, which acts as intertext for the autobiographies, marking a further round of the spiral in which works of literature (in this case her own) are represented by Frame as being able to 'mediate and illuminate relationships' (Petch 63).



To read these three open books representing experiences of Frame's life up to the time of her return to New Zealand from England in the 1960s is to be reminded inexorably of how meaning is moved about, organised by other meanings around it. If at first Frame disappeared into the folds of fiction to escape the book of the law, now that book itself, its fantasy of transparency, has become her disguise, its simplicity exploding on contact into a myriad connections back and forth across a life's work. It is her best trick yet, using the centre to speak the margin, signing her complicated self into linear narrative and transparent language, and doing it for everybody. It's another move in Certeau's art as 'tightrope dancing' which 'requires that one maintain *an equilibrium* from one moment to the next by recreating it at every step by means of new adjustments' (Certeau, *Practice*, 73). As she alters the balance of things for herself, she shifts the centre of gravity in her readers' worlds too.

All the technologies of danced language come into play in *The Carpathians*, the novel that follows the volumes of autobiography. In it, the wealthy New Yorker Mattina Brecon, reversing the movement of *Daughter Buffalo* and *Living in the Maniototo*, comes to stay for a few weeks in the small New Zealand town of Puamahara in response to 'an urgency within her' demanding that she should "'know" how the rest of the world lived' (TC 19). While she is there, she plans to research the Maori legend of the 'Memory Flower', according to which a young woman 'call[s] together the people of the land' (TC 11), having eaten the 'ripe' fruit of the Memory Flower, an action that 'releas[es] the memory of the land', and confers on her 'the function ... of a storyteller' (TC 11). During her stay in Puamahara, Mattina experiences the effects of the Gravity Star, a cosmic force which, as an epigraph to the novel explains, has the power to make objects appear 'both relatively close and ... light years away' (TC 6). In *The Carpathians*, which Nicholas Birns describes as 'in many ways a companion to *Living in the Maniototo*' (Birns 17), conditions of time and space, as in *Living in the Maniototo* and other earlier works, have the flexibility of memory/imagination. Signs reach their limit and precipitate in a midnight rain of 'letters of the alphabets of all languages' (TC

127); there is an even more pronounced uncertainty about the capacity of any one voice to 'seize control of all points of view' (TC 52) as one of the characters puts it. The narrative process is a practice of complex space, with stories nested inside stories in ways that are closer to Schrodinger's cat than Chinese boxes. The book is a recapitulation of conditions inside the manifold and an elaboration of the science of fables. In the manifold, Frame figured a process by which writing subjectivity organises the dance of memory/imagination, enabling the choreographing of a writing/written self in the autobiographies. Having created the experience of a '*locus*' for the dance in the autobiographies, she is free in *The Carpathians* to articulate her creation of a subjective authority, a '*genius*,' that is dispersed throughout the writing precisely as a function of the characters' fight to 'seize control' — authority is represented as above all a contested site. New *metaphorai* appear as vehicles of this discourse, through

the rediscovery of the legend of the Memory Flower, and the discovery of ... the Gravity Star, bending time and space to make the distant appear 'both relatively close and ... light years away' (TC 7)

The movements/migrations these tropes enact in space/time and memory/imagination are not new in Frame's work, but their figuration is. As with the manifold, experience of a subjective movement precedes its articulation. The legend of the Memory Flower figures the way in which memory of the self as 'land', as collective *locus*, is 'released' through the storytelling function. The Gravity Star figures the movement by which this de-centring or poly-centring of self occurs, a movement that results in a subjectivity that does not permit any one 'point of view' to take precedence. Tracing the departures and arrivals that permit new figurations to occur, Frame's body of work creates a travel story that 'selects and links together' the sounds, the activities of memory/imagination, the unmaskings and disappearances, the complexities of a storyteller's subjectivity. Her *œuvre* makes 'sentences' of the necessities of things — an itinerary for travellers in the city of language, not just a series of views. In the light of this

understanding, this chapter has attempted a thematic reading of some major preoccupations across Frame's novels, a movement through motivations for writing. The next chapter will explore how these motivations are played out structurally, enacted as a writing practice throughout the body of her work.

## 2 Thought becoming minor literature

In the previous chapter I treated thematically motivations of life-saving transformations effected by Janet Frame in and through her novels, canvassing major preoccupations — social, historical, personal — as they are figured in her work. In this chapter my aim is to firstly to offer a reading of Frame's work as elaborating a process that can be understood via Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming. I argue that Frame's writing carries out a project of linguistic resubjectivisation that proceeds by creating an intertwining of activated images, which I call figurations to distinguish them from isolated tropes. Using Deleuze and Guattari's theorising of modes of creative thought, I read these figurations as enacting the three modes of thought considered in *What is Philosophy?* and which I call, in the context of Frame's work, sensation, observation and fabulation. Secondly, I argue that Frame's becoming-in-writing doubles itself twice, in the production of a body of work that deterritorialises available language, and opens itself to collective deployment. This deterritorialisation and collective engagement can be understood, I argue, in terms of a third area of Deleuze and Guattari's theorisation of language — that of minor literature.

In reading Frame alongside Deleuze and Guattari's ideas of becoming, which include the concept of becoming-woman and of the girl as conceptual persona, feminist theoretical responses have helped to further refine my thinking. Deleuze's use of the figure of the girl (first elaborated in *The Logic of Sense* and returned to in *A Thousand Plateaus* and *What is Philosophy?*) and the concept of becoming-woman (*A Thousand Plateaus*) have been a subject of considerable debate among feminist theorists, who have expressed unease regarding becoming's goal of desubjectification, in the context of women's struggle to achieve a subject position from which to speak. This response is summarised by Vérena Andermatt Conley in her discussion of the work of feminists such as Alice Jardine, who in the early 80s 'argued that first one is and then one risks oneself or becomes' (V. Conley 19). According to this analysis,

woman is the first to vanish while man — in their idiolect a 'molar', or self-contained entity that contrasts the more 'molecular' or more fluid virtues of a generally feminine valence — remains intact. (V. Conley 19)

I would argue that it is possible to harness this activity of questioning any philosophical position that jeopardises the project of refusing women's 'vanishment' as subjects — and especially in the context of a study of how Frame might be understood as a self-actualising exemplar — while using the idea of becoming-woman as a way of thinking change *for* women, through a 'pattern of becoming [that] cuts across the field of all that phallogocentrism did *not* programme us to become' (Braidotti 172). Reading becoming-woman in this way, tensions between social politics and conceptual freedom (Olkowski 103) can be understood as productive, opening onto the possibility of a double becoming that enriches both feminist discourses and Deleuzian theory. And to theorise becoming while maintaining a socio-political stance is to become able to make use of Deleuze and Guattari's own adjuration that women should 'conduct a molar politics, with a view to winning back their own organism, their own history, their own subjectivity' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, 276). I wish to take up this possibility that social politics/conceptual freedom can be understood as mutually implicated, in reading becoming-woman alongside Frame's fabulations, which foreground the figure of the girl as a vector of change.

Reading Deleuze and Guattari is, in some respects, like reading Frame; they too demand serious, intrigued persistence. They insist that readers familiarise themselves with previous works in order to make sense of current ones, reading 'as you would listen to a record' (as quoted by Massumi in Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, ix), again and again until new patterns become discernable, like the 'hint, an inkling of order' (TC 126) Frame describes as

emerging from the chaos of collapsed meaning.<sup>1</sup> (Once you've been through this intensity of listening, you can drop in anywhere and find new movements.) Tom Conley, referring to Deleuze's *The Fold* — 'a dazzling summation of all the motifs of the earlier writings' (T. Conley, *SAQ*, 629) — describes another element Frame and Deleuze and Guattari have in common, namely 'the demand that ... style be read as ... content' (T. Conley, *SAQ*, 630). Like Frame, they too are obsessed with connections between language and the creation of worlds, such that 'There is no longer a tripartite division between a field of reality (the world) and a field of representation (the book) and a field of subjectivity (the author)' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, 23), an idea Frame returns to repeatedly as she constructs writing subjectivity through her characters and through the structures of her writing.

Deleuze and Guattari's figurations of how subjective change occurs resonate with Frame's beyond shared musical imagery. Where she talks of writing subjectivity as existing in a marginal space where 'words like plants ... grow poisonous tall and hollow about the rusted knives and empty drums of meaning' (*EA* 3), they articulate the concept of the 'rhizome', a multi-centred subjectivity which evades totalisation through 'breakout ... the best and the worst: potato and couchgrass, or the weed' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, 7). Where Frame increasingly over time in her novels offers multiple centres or a constant shifting of centres within any one subject in pursuit of 'evasion and breakout', Deleuze and Guattari offer the possibility of 'becoming', transformation that is not mimetic but shamanistic, involving permanent change through experience of difference. Frame's elaboration of subjectivity constructed by folding together chosen time-places in imagination is matched by Deleuze and Guattari's 'lines of flight', subjective shifts that create resonances with Certeau in making it possible to 'escape without leaving'. They articulate an analysis of forms of creative thought which facilitate subjective change, and then create a category of minor literature through which this becoming can be enacted. Frame carries out her analysis on the

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<sup>1</sup> Frederic Jameson argues that 'methodological clues ... a dualism of slowness and speed [that] emerges as a pattern in its own right' in *A Thousand Plateaus* 'minimally authorize us to see the whole book as an immense musical score' (Jameson, *SAQ*, 413).

run, in writing, arriving at her own body of work that both articulates and creates altered subjective space in response to the necessity of escape.

Writers, theorists, the three of them demand that we read as if language were music, that we listen for sensory and conceptual refrains across a body of work, that we understand writing and reading as the construction of escape routes, ways into difference.

Frame and Deleuze and Guattari are literally contemporaries of one another and of us as readers/writers, but they are also contemporaries in the sense described by Jean-Luc Nancy:

someone in whom we recognise a voice or gesture ... necessary not through the necessity of destiny or sense of history, nor as an outcome or programme, but as the evidence of a present: this moment, this present had this sound and this voice — it had to have them ... This tone is not something added on to the present like a superfluous ornament, but rather it is the present itself, the presentation of the present as such. (Nancy 107–08)

As contemporaries in this sense, then, Frame and Deleuze and Guattari are situated at a point at the end of modernism when the work of art or the philosophical concept respectively is still dreamt of as an achievable whole, but at the same time is profoundly distrusted, along with other closed forms, as an ally of totalising forces. Frame works within the novelistic genre with its inbuilt impulses towards resolution and circularity, although she 'does not refer to any of her works as "novels"' (Alley, *Inward Sun*, 81), and subverts, as she creates, each approach to closure. Deleuze and Guattari speak of works of art as 'monument[s]' (Deleuze and Guattari *Philosophy*, 168), even as they elaborate a subjectivity of 'lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, 3) that challenge and exceed what has been made.

I read Frame's work as her means of writing herself out of the asylum, creating and vindicating her own subjective space within and for a culture that otherwise can only see her, and those like her, as mad. In each novel she makes the attempt to bring back from an experience of chaotic dissolution of the known world a 'new music' (FW 90), 'new language' (SGB 251) 'new view' (SS 17). In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari offer a useful way of thinking about this attempt in their analysis of creativity in terms of a variety of modes of approach to chaos motivated by a need for renewal, suggesting that differing realms of thought — philosophy, science and art — make this dangerous attempt, facing the terrifying contingency of all human understanding in order to (re)formulate ideas, descriptions, sensations that are adequate to changing experience. Orthodoxy, the mass of opinions that organise the world and so form a shield against chaos, is cracked open to make space for the altered shapes of what is to come.

Creative impulses, I suggested in Chapter One, arise out of life-and-death necessities, figured and lived by Frame in the experience of orthodoxy-as-asylum in both its senses, protective *and* ultimately murderously confining. The cracking open of the known must be carried out with an exact mixture of force and delicacy, since the risk of being blasted by the unknowable is as great as that of being stifled by the too-well-known. As Deleuze and Guattari argue in *A Thousand Plateaus*

You don't do it with a sledge-hammer, you use a very fine file ... You have to keep enough of the organism for it to reform each dawn; and you have to keep small supplies of significance and subjectification, if only to turn them against their own systems when the circumstance demand it. (160)

Is it not necessary to retain ... a minimal subject from which to extract materials, affects and assemblages. (270)



Those whose necessity dictates that they challenge existing structures, like Frame and her figures of resistance, Daphne (*Owls Do Cry*), Istina (*Faces in the Water*), Zoe (*The Edge of the Alphabet*), Vera/Erlene (*Scented Gardens for the Blind*), Malfred (*A State of Siege*) and the writer-characters of the novels that follow, are precisely the ones who have already been subjected to great trauma. The history of creativity is a history of developing technologies of sufficient force and delicacy to enable their users to crack the necessary, confining, and constantly re-forming shield of the known, and to have some chance of surviving.

Like Frame's concern to create new subjective ground in her novels, the activity of thought that occupies *What is Philosophy?* is not that of contemplation, reflection and communication of the already known: 'Of all the finite movements of thought, the form of recognition is certainly the one that goes the least far and is the most impoverished and puerile' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 139). But how can patterning mind move toward what is unpatterned? Deleuze and Guattari propose three styles of encounter that are helpful in thinking through movements in Frame's work: philosophy's creation of *concepts*; science's creation of descriptive *functions*; art's creation of affects and percepts in *blocs of sensation*.

How modernism in its structuralist incarnation loves to present itself as 'scientific' discourse, a descriptive genre (Frame herself is fond of lists, categories, quotations) — in this case offering us human thought as a series of categories. What modernism does not draw attention to is the fact that this is a style of fabulation in itself, and the usefulness of *What Is Philosophy?* lies in the way it, like other fables, uses figures. What appear at first to be taxonomies — philosophy, art, science — turn out to be three beautiful daughters, each of whom has a part to play as a style of being, in the world of thought. As Paul Patton puts it 'For Deleuze, philosophy is one style of thinking alongside others. The fact that it creates concepts gives it no preeminence in relation to science or art, but it does imply a distinction between thinking and knowing' (Patton 6). In the reading of Frame that

follows, I argue that she uses the figures or styles that Deleuze and Guattari describe as art's sensations and science's descriptions, in the service of entering into the third style — that of fabulation, creating for herself through narrative organisation an adequate concept of subjectivity, a philosophical basis for a lived ontology. As Deleuze and Guattari say themselves, 'The three thoughts intersect or intertwine but without synthesis or identification' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 198–99). But where they, as philosophers, begin their work with the creation of concepts and move on to science and art, I will begin with art (the eldest daughter?) in Frame's work as a ground for conceptual thought.

For the first twenty years, from the 1950s into the 1970s, a major concern of Frame's novels is to offer, in a single movement, the dissolution and subsequent re-forming of language that is available to her, as a means of both describing and enacting marginalised subjectivity. She must speak, and speak about, what is non-signifying, mad by definition, writing madness that is a claim to sanity, sanity that constructs madness. Through *Owls Do Cry* (1957), *Faces in the Water* (1961), *The Edge of the Alphabet* (1962), the novella *Snowman*, *Snowman* (1963) which extends the landscape and the subjectivity constructed in *The Edge of the Alphabet*, and on to *Scented Gardens for the Blind* (1963), she establishes kinds and conditions of marginalisation in the New Zealand of the second half of the twentieth century: the forces that marginalise, the patterns of their coercion, the sensations of those subject to such forces. In *The Adaptable Man* (1965), *A State of Siege* (1966), *Yellow Flowers in the Antipodean Room* (1968) published in New Zealand as *The Rainbirds*, *Intensive Care* (1970) and *Daughter Buffalo* (1972) she elaborates an increasing variety of responses to marginalising forces. In *Living in the Maniototo* (1979), the novel that follows *Daughter Buffalo*, a shift occurs that I will discuss via Deleuze and Guattari's idea of philosophical concept.

Enabling a crossover between madness and signification, and articulating the relations between the two: these are the motivations of Frame's approach to chaos, an approach that, according to Deleuze and Guattari defines creative

activity as against activity of thought that is merely 'a form of recognition' of the already-known. According to this definition, the artist (as compared with the philosopher or the scientist) approaches chaos by creating a plane of composition on which an infinity of lived affections and perceptions are transformed and made readable as independent '*beings ... of sensation*' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 164), preserved as long as their materials last. Art's function is not to capture lived experience, but to use the lived as a stepping-off point for becomings, altered subjectivities that can give a home to increased complexities of experience, for a time. Thus Frame enacts madness through the characters of Daphne, Istina, Zoe, Vera/Erlene, through linguistic structures such as Vera Glace's 'new language' in *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, the 'news that was not in any language' of *A State of Siege*, Godfrey Rainbird's 'icy spelling' in *Yellow Flowers* and Milly Galbraith's 'special spelling' in *Intensive Care*, and through narrative structures such as the shifting centres of subjectivity in *Scented Gardens for the Blind* and *Daughter Buffalo*, in the service of extending the possibilities of sanity to include the previously unsignified. It is possible to think of her as writing a *becoming-madness* that takes us by the hand and leads us out of our sanity into fear and loneliness, yes, but also survival into a new sanity:

By means of the material, the aim of art is to wrest the percept from perceptions of objects and the states of a perceiving subject, to wrest the affect from affections as the transition from one state to another: to extract a bloc of sensations, a pure being of sensations ... every work of art is a *monument*, but here the monument is not something commemorating a past, it is a bloc of present sensations that owe their preservation only to themselves and that provide the event with the compound that celebrates it. The monument's action is not memory but fabulation. We write not with childhood memories but through blocs of childhood that are the becoming-child of the present. (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 167–68)

Frame's art is a response to problems of subjectivity: how is it possible to produce the 'event' of crushing historical conditions — small town New Zealand at a time when the range of the sayable is agonisingly limited — in a way that will enable us to breathe, if we continue to apprehend the world in the manner that produced those conditions? According to my reading of Deleuze and Guattari, as a form of thought, art cannot be confined to recognition and representation of known objects: 'the artist ... goes beyond the perceptual states and affective transitions of the lived. The artist is a seer, a becomer' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 171). Frame *becomes* asylum and asylum inmate through a transformation of lived experience to elements of meaning in a composed universe: 'not perception of the moor in Hardy but the moor as percept; oceanic percepts in Melville; urban percepts, or those of the mirror, in Virginia Woolf' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 168–69). Percepts are states that register subjective shifts in response to altered affects, so we have a series of percepts that are responses to asylum affects. Frame is a becomer in that she is involved in a continual metamorphosis: renewed affects produce changed percepts which make new affects possible, each a precondition for the other, in response to conditions of the moment in which she creates. '*Affects are precisely these nonhuman becomings of man, just as percepts—including the town—are nonhuman landscapes of nature*' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 169), and because they 'exceed all lived experience' they 'must from now on be created, in other words conserved' (Zourabichvili 203) in the form of art. Frame is interested in writing the asylum only to draw us in, to force on us a becoming-mad that calls into question all our conceptions of sanity, and in doing so, to validate her own non-sanity. Her becoming is always a double movement that implicates both reader and writer in 'an overwhelming spectacle: the seer does not re-emerge from it identical to his former self; he has learned, he is a becoming' (Zourabichvili 192).

Frame's art asks *How can it be apprehended?* In the world of becoming-madness that Frame leads us into, signification is turned around so that available language is presented as chaotic misrepresentation, and in the terms

of Deleuze and Guattari that I am using, perception and affection for her are an undifferentiated chaos as the 'given' that must be organised by percept and peopled by affect. Asylum percepts — of the constrictions of available language and how its subjects conform themselves to it or resist it — are followed by affects of becoming-mad that form a transition to new sanity. Percept transforms known formulations, affect decides how those formulations will be used and exceeded, turned into further formulations that will in turn be used. Percept that permits 'becoming animal, plant, molecular, becoming zero' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 169), becoming mad. Affect that fixes, develops the transformation and anticipates the next becoming, searching the plane of composition, the earth, along desire-lines, lines of taste. Using Cézanne as their painterly ideal they say: 'Sometimes it is necessary to lie down on the earth, like the painter does also, in order to get to the "motif," that is to say, the percept' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 171).

Frame's art is a form of thought whose role is to demonstrate the possibilities of human subjectivity by continually roaming the chaotic earth of sensation and making little camps there — the camp of the young girl in *Owls Do Cry*, the camp of the inmate in *Faces in the Water*, the camp of the observer/outsider in *The Edge of the Alphabet*, and so on, to the camp of the old man in *Daughter Buffalo*. (What comes after is the camp of the nomad, but that is another story.) These camps are not abandoned when the next move comes but incorporated into new territory as points that plot a trajectory, stars constellating. Direction of movement is a matter of present impulses, manner of movement a matter of style at the nexus of history and physiology that is the artist, but the camps are for everyone. In writing her transformations, Frame passes them into collective possession in a double becoming: they become property of 'a people to come', the ultimate utopian impulse in Deleuze and Guattari:

Art undoes the triple organization of perceptions, affections and opinions in order to substitute a monument composed of percepts,

affects, and blocs of sensations. The writer uses words, but by creating a syntax that makes them pass into sensation that makes the standard language stammer, tremble, cry, or even sing: this is the style, the "tone," the language of sensations, or the foreign language within language that summons forth a people to come ... The writer twists language, makes it vibrate, seizes hold of it, and rends it in order to wrest the percept from perceptions, the affect from affections, the sensation from opinions. (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 176)

In setting her imagination in opposition to available language, Frame creates monuments, 'which have no other object or subject but themselves' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 171), but she does so in order to widen the range of living possibility. If between life and art 'there is ultimately roughly the same relationship as between the barking animal-dog and the celestial constellation-Dog' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 172), still this cosmic ordering has its effects at ground level. Frame offers, not a description of autism to arouse our horror and pity in the character of Erlene in *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, but a sensation of confinement and silencing, of speech turned in on itself, that takes us into another subjective realm, which from now on will be part of our world too. To wrest the sensation from opinions, to extract from the sounds and images of language new subjects:

that raise them to the height of the earth's song and the cry of humanity: that which constitutes tone, health, becoming ... A monument does not commemorate or celebrate something that happened but confides to the ear of the future the persistent sensations that embody the event.  
(Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 176)

In saving her own life by writing, Frame is nevertheless engaged in a collective work, even if the 'people to come' comprises one person, even if the monument dissolves on completion, the book goes out of print — 'the victory of a revolution is immanent and consists in the new bonds it installs between people' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 177). The collective

work of writing is in bringing into being, against the forces of confinement, subjective resonances that did not exist before.

How does Frame construct these novels, these monuments that lead us into another way of being in the world? How does she capture from the chaos of formulaic language 'the persistent sensations that embody the event' of a subjectivity that has been refused articulation? Again it is useful to begin with Deleuze and Guattari's description of "'varieties" of compounds of sensations' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 168) which transform the lived into percept and affect: 'vibration ... the embrace or the clinch ... withdrawal, division, distension' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 168)

Vibration renews perception of lived experience by drawing attention to the sensory components a particular medium uses to construct that experience — the plastic and textural effects proper to stone, wood and metal; colour-effects and the tonal possibilities of music, and in the case of language the sonorous and rhythmic properties of words. This is a theme Frame enacts and figures across the entire body of her work at all levels, from genre effects through to words and phrases; from *Owls Do Cry* (1957) to *The Carpathians* (1988) — first to last. The major sign of resistance in her texts and in her characters is their voluntary or involuntary shaking apart of available language, across a continuum that includes both figuration and enactment, and where the two are often interchangeable. Enactments of the disintegration of language act as figures of the process of subjective change, and figures of change also enact the shift they point towards.

*Owls Do Cry* provides a foundational example of two extremes of sensation that 'make the standard language stammer, tremble, cry or even sing' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 176). In one case, the impoverishment of 'standard language' becomes an object of fascination — words so worn as to be featureless, phrases broken by over-use are turned into treasure, as in the case of conversations between Bob and Amy, parents of the Withers children,

which are made up of a mixture of aphorisms and phrases that have become truncated with use:

- What shift Bob?
- Late shift Amy. Home at ten ...
- Oh Dad, you'll never get your sleep in ...
- Good Lord, is that the time? Make sure you keep those kids away from the rubbish dump, they're the talk of the town. (ODC 22)

In this situation speech is estranged in the process of becoming a mere matrix for the incantation of commands and prohibitions. Its poverty, its 'sobriety' becomes fabulous, like Samuel Beckett's use of English and French as described by Deleuze and Guattari:

a purely intensive usage of language [opposed] to all symbolic ... usages of it ... a perfect and unformed expression, a materially intense expression. ... dryness and sobriety, a willed poverty, pushing deterritorialization to such an extreme that nothing remains but intensities. (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 19)

The speech of the realm of childhood, on the other hand, is characterised by its richness, its 'exhilaration', as Deleuze and Guattari say of the language of Joyce as compared with that of Beckett. Joyce, they say, 'never stops operating by exhilaration and overdetermination and brings about all sorts of worldwide deterritorializations' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 19). In italicised passages throughout the book *Daphne, Toby and Chicks Withers* bring standard language to its senses, wrestling syntax, punctuation, grammar, point of view out of their habitual patterns, singing a minutely detailed and coherent shape of words for the tickling, warm, rocking, 'firr-firr-firr' (ODC 11) of texture and sensation that makes up their world.

All the novels participate in a fragmentation of narrative structure by unstable point of view and temporality, as well as by crossing genres through the



inclusion of non-narrative poem-like passages in the text, most notably in *Owls Do Cry*, *The Edge of the Alphabet*, *Intensive Care*, *Daughter Buffalo*, and *Living in the Maniototo*. At the level of language, devices for enacting this shattering include simple challenges to syntactic convention, word games, use of nursery-rhythms and the aural riffs of poetry, repetition and altering of context:

And the place grows bean flower, pea-green lush of grass, swarm of insects dizzily hitting the high spots; dunny rosette creeping covering shawl cream in a knitted cosy of roses. (*ODC* 9)

shape pleases; sob bitterly; rattrap; made dull; vague guess. (*SGB* 104)

I was born in Milan. Could you please weigh this chicken for me? I want a plain blue tie and a colored handkerchief to match. The telephone is out of order. (*AM* 16)

Alienation of meaning by returning language to its sound components is intensified by the use of techniques such as those used in the novella *Snowman*, *Snowman* (1963) where the new is experienced as an involuntary and inexplicable disintegration in language, like speaking in tongues, but without the gift of interpretation: 'My God, he thought. He knew and the others in the room knew. The holtrime, the wentwail, the sturgescene had ...' (*Frame*, *Human Heart*, 60). This disintegration occurs again in *A State of Siege* (1966), with the involuntary nature of the experience underlined by the fact that here, disintegrated/reformed language comes literally from outside, in the form of a message wrapped around a stone and thrown through the window: 'She read the news that was not in any language she had learned: *Soltrin, carmew, desse puniform wingering brime*' (*SS* 197). Here language figures as well as enacts a relation between current/available and altered subjectivities — they are opaque to one another, even while tantalisingly familiar in their patterns and rhythms. The move is one that involves an altered articulation of the world. In the examples just given, the experiences of

change are involuntary, coming as visitations, even when they are, as in the case of Malfred Signal in *A State of Siege*, longed for as well as feared.

A clue as to why differing subjective positions are opaque to one another is given through the 'new language' (SGB 251) of Vera Glace in *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, which constructs the shift as one of changed motivation. After 'thirty years without speech' (SGB 248), she breaks her silence with the advent of a nuclear apocalypse, and the 'language of humanity' (SGB 251) she speaks is a cry of pain and desolation: "Ug-g-Ug. Ohhh Ohh g. Ugg." Out of ancient rock and marshland; out of ice and stone' (SGB 252). New language is not motivated by a need to represent the world, but by a need to offer an adequate response to the world. The language of 'humanity' can no longer be merely 'human', but must become 'humane'.

When Frame begins her exploration of agency in the process of subjective change, her characters start to experience 'new language' differently. Figured and enacted linguistically, the change is no longer experienced as complete opacity, but as a change in emphasis that turns language around. While the move is at first experienced involuntarily by Godfrey Rainbird in *Yellow Flowers in the Antipodean Room* (1968), he later learns that he can switch back and forth between his former reading of the world and the new 'spelling' (YF 157):

A children's book with its big print was clear. Its cover vividly sky-marked, planet-streaked, *The Wonderful Rats*.

He shut his eyes, opened them, and read *The Wonderful Star*. So it is not beyond my control, he said to himself, I now see the word and its lining. (YF 159)

Milly Galbraith of *Intensive Care* (1970) consciously deploys her 'special spelling' (IC 243) from the start in order, as she explains it, to have her 'own language' (IC 238): "I'm dull-normal. ... *Doll-normill*. I'm mature but just past doll-size and my brain is doll-size." (IC 224).

Images of the experience of shattering and re-forming language abound throughout the novels. In addition to those mentioned above — the unknown languages of *Snowman*, *Snowman* and *A State of Siege*, the differently-motivated language of *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, the altered spellings of *Yellow Flowers* and *Intensive Care* — Frame offers the movement as that of the emergence of 'a new kind of music of curse and cry' (FW 90); 'a cry such as a bird makes or a beast' (SGB 10), and in *The Carpathians*, the disintegration of 'all languages' (TC 127) into a 'rain ... of the "old" punctuation and language — apostrophes, notes of music, letters of alphabets' (TC 127), which is matched by a corresponding 'chorus' from the human world 'like the first cries of those who had never known or spoken words ... yet within and beyond the chorus ... came a hint, an inkling of order, a small strain recognisable as music' (TC 126). Figured and enacted, vibration, the fragmentation of language into its components of aural sensation is a major thematic and structural preoccupation in Frame's novels.

In addition to effects that can be thought of as vibrations of and in language and therefore in the subjectivity that language constructs, Frame returns again and again to a consideration of subjective experiences of time and place that have their correlate in another of Deleuze and Guattari's 'varieties of sensation': 'the embrace'. The embrace is a polyphonic effect which forces us to experience two or more sensations at once — as in the modulation of sculptural forms; in the presentation of distinct, even contradictory qualities in a single aesthetic figure, or the melding of two figures; in effects of harmony or dissonance in music; and in language, effects which abolish distances of place or time so that they are experienced as a simultaneity.

Frame enacts the embrace as a narrative mode through the presence of an overarching survivor-storyteller subjectivity which subsumes each novel's characters and the characters of all the novels together, while at the same time ensuring that within each novel, characters are experienced as dialogic harmonies and dissonances. At another level of narrative she creates the

embrace as a condition of characters' subjectivities on an increasingly complex scale. Thora Pattern of *The Edge of the Alphabet* (1962) and Vera Glace of *Scented Gardens for the Blind* (1963) act as containers for other characters who form subsets of time and place. Later a dual uncertainty is created about who is writing whom in the two main characters of *Daughter Buffalo* (1972), and later still in *Living in the Maniototo* (1979) a radical uncertainty emerges about who or what constitutes the main character who subsumes others within the narrative: 'I, Mavis Furness, Mavis Barwell, Mavis Halletton ... Alice Thumb, or Ariella, Lokinia, or Maui's sister, or mere Naomi, Susan, Ngaere, Belinda. Or Violet Pansy Proudlock' (LM 11-12). In what seems to be a partial role as summary of themes and structures that have preceded it, *The Carpathians* (1983) compounds uncertainty about who characters 'really' are and which of them contains which others. This uncertainty, which surrounds the books of autobiography in terms of their place in the chronology of Frame's work, and in terms of the multiple links between them and the novels, also informs, by extension, the autobiographical voice.

Again, as with the effects that can be described as vibration, Frame self-consciously figures as well as enacts the embrace, constructing the activities of memory and imagination as literal movements across time and space. Characters both major and minor in the novels are always on the move, from New Zealand to England or vice versa (*The Edge of the Alphabet* (1962), *Scented Gardens for the Blind* (1963), *The Adaptable Man* (1965), *A State of Siege* (1966), *Yellow Flowers in the Antipodean Room* (1968)), to and from both England and America (*Intensive Care* (1970)), from New Zealand to America and back (*Daughter Buffalo* (1972), *Living in the Maniototo* (1979), *The Carpathians* (1988)). Images of the journey and migration recur constantly as figure-enactments, as in *The Edge of the Alphabet*, when Thora Pattern's 'journey of discovery through the lives of three people' (EA 4) takes the form of an account of a literal sea-journey from New Zealand to England.

In this and every other instance, early in the novel the literal movement that brings together distant points in time and place is constructed simultaneously as a deliberate imaginative choice. In *Scented Gardens for the Blind* Edward Glace journeys to England and to the past, deserting his wife and daughter in New Zealand to research the genealogy of the Strang family. In *The Adaptable Man* members of the Maude family each choose a different time-place to identify with, their choices figured by Frame as a literal embrace, as when her narrator says of one of the characters who has chosen Australia as his place of identification over his native England, that he lives 'in a state of geographical bigamy' (AM 29). In *A State of Siege* Malfred Signal chooses to move to an island far from her home in order to achieve a new way of seeing. In *Yellow Flowers* Godfrey Rainbird seeks to 'feel well fed and warm' (YF 3) in New Zealand and to escape the 'haunting' of his childhood in wartime England. Tom Livingstone of *Intensive Care* reverses this movement, returning to England from New Zealand as an old man looking for his wartime first love and finding her in the 'Recovery Unit' (IC 5). Turnlung of *Daughter Buffalo* travels to America to 'take a closer look at death ... [in] a country of death' (DB 20-21). In a now-familiar pattern of elaboration and resonance, Mavis Halleton of *Living in the Maniototo* visits the United States where she 'meets' (LM 15) the novel's other characters just as, an octave of novels previously in *The Edge of the Alphabet*, Thora Pattern had met and made her journey through the lives of three people.

*The Carpathians*, in its capacity as a summary of movements of the previous novels and books of autobiography, articulates the role of the embrace in Frame's work. The novel is constructed as a series of movements between America and New Zealand, presided over by memory and imagination figured as forces capable of abolishing accepted laws of time and space. 'The legend of the Memory Flower' (TC 7) combines constructs that are offered in earlier novels regarding memories and those who keep them. In *The Edge of the Alphabet*, for example, memory is what produces story — narration is a response to the fact that 'the dead ... keep cropping up' (EA 3), while *Intensive Care* describes subjective qualities of those who maintain memories: 'these

pleated females with their folds and tucks and creases ... it is they who will keep the race-memory; flower seed in a crack of the world' (IC 217). Writing takes hold of memory and transforms it to generate story as an embrace of past-in-present. A mode of subjectivity that lends itself to such an embrace is characterised by an organised complexity of functional folds. *The Carpathians* combines and extends these ideas, explicitly suggesting that the same subjective conditions underpin both the keeping of memories and their activation and organisation in the form of stories that sustain the collective: 'the young woman released the memory of the land when she picked and tasted the ripe fruit ... the yesterday within the tomorrow ... [after which she had] no human function but that of a story-teller' (TC 11).

The image in *The Carpathians* of the Gravity Star relates to the ordering function of imagination with respect to memory; an embrace that includes but goes far beyond temporal differences to include aesthetic, emotional, ethical, geographical differences and distances of all kinds. It is imagination that judges the subjective 'gravity' of things, that creates the 'folds and tucks and creases' of story, reorganising orthodoxies of

memory and point of view (removed, overturned by the Gravity Star) the scene now of celebration, now of battle ... a galaxy [can appear] to be both relatively close and seven billion light years away. (TC 7)

Withdrawal, division, distension — the third effect of sensation to be found in art as described by Deleuze and Guattari — has the opposite effect to that of the embrace, in that it forces awareness of disjunction between two or more sensations: groups of figures are positioned in such a way that a dialogue is unavoidable, or a single figure is shown to diverge, as in a musical theme and variations. In *Frame*, the embrace and withdrawal are to be found together in the same structures. The embrace that forces an experience of the many-in-one of writing-subjectivity is also an experience of dialogue, as in the subsumed characters of the early novels, or the shifting subjective 'ownership' of the later ones. Subjectivity that folds the past into the embrace

of the present, or the distant into the near, also brings with it the possibility of disjunction. Across the body of Frame's work, the equivalent of musical themes and variations appear in elaborations and resonances between novels such as those described between journey motifs in *The Edge of the Alphabet* and *Living in the Maniototo*, or between the externally-imposed constraints of the asylum in *Owls Do Cry* or *Faces in the Water*, and the self-imprisonment of characters in *The Edge of the Alphabet* or *Scented Gardens for the Blind*. Memory Flower and Gravity Star in their joint manifestations within the storytelling process ensure the experience of 'something that at first seemed implausible' (TC 7) — embrace as disjunction, disjunction as embrace — 'a galaxy ... appears to be relatively close and seven billion light years away'.

Language in the service of its own reform, Frame's use of vibration, embrace, withdrawal. Every effect of sound, image, structure a confounding of available constructions, like the earthquake-effect that turns solid earth fluid before it can come to rest again (for a time) in a new conformation. And in the moment of fluidity and coming to momentary rest, another, descriptive, form of thought comes into play. Throughout her work, Frame uses images that seem to freeze-frame moments of subjective change or entrapment: Francie falling into the fire at the rubbish dump in *Owls Do Cry*; the 'wild dance' (FW 44) of the patients in *Faces in the Water*; Thora's search for speech in *The Edge of the Alphabet*; the stone thrown through the window in *A State of Siege*; the operation of the manifold in *Living in the Maniototo*; the midnight rain in *The Carpathians*. These images can be considered in terms of the second category of thought (and there was a second daughter ...) discussed by Deleuze and Guattari in *What is Philosophy?* — that of science.

Where the creation of sensations which renew our capacity for response is the thought-activity proper to art for Deleuze and Guattari, 'the object of science is ... functions that are presented as propositions in discursive systems. The elements of functions are called *functives*' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 117). Science approaches chaos (and the second daughter went out into the forest ...) not as an infinity of sensory inputs as art does, but as a kind of

indescribability resulting from 'an infinite speed of birth and disappearance' of 'all possible forms' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 118) in a plane of reference. Where art creates sensory experiences whose integrity consists in recomposition, 'shattering lived perceptions into a sort of cubism' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 171), science creates functions which 'freeze-frame' the trajectories across which infinite movements trace themselves. Where art creates a sensory form (eg the sensation of entrapment in Frame) in response to an incorporeal problem (the need for more room to 'be'), science describes or projects the incorporeal (eg the moment at which new language coalesces in *A State of Siege*) in terms of 'a physical existence or actuality ... that can be grasped by systems of coordinates' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 119) (in *A State of Siege*, the image of a stone wrapped in paper thrown through a window). Functions describe a 'state of affairs of formed matter in the system' of limits (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 122) that circumscribes the state of affairs: the swoop (how high? how far?), the acceleration (what speed? what duration?). It is a question of variables and their limits (gravitational, atmospheric, bioenergetic). Where art asks, *How can it be apprehended?* science asks, *What's happening?*

Functions offer a way of thinking about Frame's creation, on the boundary between figuration and enactment, of images of subjective movement. If art is the daughter who goes out into the forest and comes back saying 'I felt ...', science is the one who comes back saying 'I made these pictures of some things out there'. This mode complements the visceral conviction offered by sensation. To feel (sensation), and to begin to create a narrative of the moment in which feelings are embedded (function). A cost of creating such an image/narrative is that functions can describe movements on condition that they arrest them, and 'in general, a state of affairs does not actualize a chaotic virtual without taking from it a potential' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 122). Snapshot: this is what it's like *now*. Measuring a state of affairs given one set of variables (height, distance) excludes other variables (speed, time).



When we go from the state of affairs to the *thing* itself, we see that a thing is always related to several axes at once according to variables that are functions of each other, even if the internal unity remains undetermined. (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 122)

The question is how to free ourselves of the static reading created by a figure — for example, the asylum ‘like a hive with the bees wailing and screaming behind the rusted wire-netting windows, as if their day’s honey had been lost or never gathered’ (FW 44). How to approach the *What’s happening?* of things, so as to determine the ‘internal unity’ formed by relationships between axes? In other words, how to include time in the ‘equation’, faithfully describing a state of affairs, while remaining open to change. It can be done by moving the thing described — in this case subjective experience confronting available language — through a program of changing relationships between axes, creating a series of ‘nows’ until a pattern emerges:

when the thing itself undergoes changes of coordinates, strictly speaking it becomes a *body*, and instead of the function taking the limit and the variable as a reference, it takes an invariant and a series of transformations. (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 122)

Linguistic tropes lend themselves beautifully to this process, since the invariant is already present as the ‘body’ of the image itself — in the example given above from *Faces in the Water*, the image of the hive. Things and states of affairs are assembled in the form of the trope, as the ‘invariant’ that determines ‘an absolute minimum ... of independent extensions of this basic body’ (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 123). The hive as virtual entity — a sum of states of affairs of experience-in-search-of-language. The hive’s ‘states of affairs’ include subjective be(e)ing, longing for and dependent on the possibility of articulation in language; distillation/transformation of what is carried back and forth between experience and the system of language; encounter with a variety of conditions of the system in terms of resistance to, or facilitation of, speech. Frame’s image of the hive gives a virtual habitation,

a kind of name or 'invariant' to particular combinations of subjective circumstances, while still acknowledging the chaotic potential which surrounds it: this is just one among an infinity of possible movements. Its choice is motivated by the sense of urgency, of necessity, that has been established through art's sensations.

Frame avoids making the 'body' of the image a part of the problem it seeks to describe by taking it through a 'series of transformations', actualising, by altering, the particular circumstances of the states of affairs which make it up. In *Faces in the Water* (1961), the hive with its 'wailing and screaming' inhabitants who have 'lost or never gathered' the sweetness of articulate speech is an image of the frustrations of hell, undergone by those whose experience is resisted by the system of available language, 'as if in their life they have never been able to say what they needed to say or have never had anyone to say it to' (FW 49). By the time she comes to write *Living in the Maniototo* (1979), however, ownership of the process of articulation has passed from the system to its users: 'the hive' has become 'a wild bees' nest' (LM 118). As a consequence (and model) of changes brought about by the writing process itself, being 'able to say' is no longer the object of 'years of search ... wasted ... time and yearning' in 'flowerless fields' (FW 44). Instead, speech is a property of resistant subjectivity, subjectivity which has transformed itself over the course of Frame's body of work from an image of incarcerated powerlessness — hive as asylum — to one of dedicated agency in the form of writing-consciousness — a 'wild bees' nest ... full of the honey of assorted flowers' (LM 118); a place for distillation of subjective experience whose authority is no longer in question. The virtual is captured as frozen movements, states of affairs, and reanimated as patterned shifts of coordinates, delineating the *What's happening?* of a body which actualises itself in the moment of interrogation. Details of the image tell what changes have occurred, moving from confinement as detritus within 'rusty wire-netting' to free flight in and out of an organically modifiable repository of treasure:

The difference between body and state of affairs (or thing) pertains to the individuation of the body, which proceeds by a cascade of actualizations. With bodies, the relationship between independent variables becomes fully worked out, even if it means providing itself with a potential or power that renews its individuation. (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 123)

What Deleuze and Guattari describe as the thought process characteristic of science proceeds by alternately making virtual the actual in the form of 'freeze-frame' functions, and then reactualising these functions as a 'cascade' of stills that create virtual bodies, 'communications' of 'separated, unconnected systems' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 123), as the system of the hive and the system of the wild bees' nest would be, were they not situated within a body of work that lends itself to the cascade effect. Each of Frame's novels is an elaboration of some aspect of the last that relates to the work of subjective transformation. Because of this, although the number of movements or images that could pass through each novel's 'frame' is potentially unlimited, all the novels share the range of variables attributed to a plane of reference that is determined, not in advance, but according to the necessities of unfolding subjective transformation. It is as if she sent the two daughters, art and science, into the forest together, and only where the first says 'I feel something new here' does the second make an image describing what's going on. Image-making on its own does not have a capacity for selection: its motivation must come from elsewhere.

The creation of links between images across the boundaries of individual novels is another example of Frame's refusal of closure, another way in which she manages to create the monument and make it subject to change at the same time. Where does each work end if a reading must include both anticipation and retrospection? Although image-making lends itself to the creation of solitary, lapidary instances, since 'science ... produces all kinds of bifurcations on a plane of reference that does not preexist its detours or its layout' and 'the history of the sciences is inseparable from the construction,

nature, dimensions, and proliferation of axes' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 123), Frame makes her images act as markers of significant moments within a wider narrative, an itinerary of subjective change. Isolated tropes, however brilliant, do not interest her. Having enacted and figured the process of change, a third form of thought becomes possible, one that can account for how the process is possible at all.

In this chapter, up to this point I have described the way Frame, in response to problems posed by particular historical conditions, constructs a narrative of subjective change through her writing by creating sensations corresponding to subjective experience, which she then locates and orients by means of descriptive images. She models a self that is in the process of learning to 'say what it needs to say': *I have this sensation, and here is my image of what causes it*. Having elaborated this movement over the course of nine novels, from *Owls Do Cry* (1957) to *Daughter Buffalo* (1972), in her tenth novel, *Living in the Maniototo* (1979) she arrives at the construction, again in figurative terms, of a metanarrative setting forth the conditions under which such subjective changes are able to occur. This is the appearance of the third daughter who, after the other two have felt and described their moments in the forest, says 'I understand'. The principle of fabulation, the storytelling principle, introduced as perceiver and facilitator of change: the writing self who is able to observe the landscape and make use of its features as lines of flight. The form of thought proper to this principle of connection is, according to Deleuze and Guattari, the formation of concepts. Daniel Smith summarises this movement in his discussion of Deleuze's reading of Kantian faculties:

Such is the use of the faculties put forward by Proust: a sensibility that apprehends and receives signs; an intelligence, memory, and imagination that interpret them and explicate their meaning ... and a pure thought which discovers their essence as the sufficient reason of the sign and its meaning. (D. Smith 34)

Philosophical concepts as defined by Deleuze and Guattari are thought-constructs, 'created as a function of [knowledge] problems which are thought to be badly understood or badly posed' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 16). They present 'possible worlds' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 48) in response to these problems: for example, the concept of a bird might be a response to the problem of flight. In *Living in the Maniototo*, Frame offers the concept of 'the manifold' (LM 31, 108, 117-118) as a figure of writing consciousness, in response to the problem of how to constitute subjectivity that is able to accommodate change and difference. It is a move that defers the closures of culture, drawing on the Kantian definition of manifold as 'the sum of particulars furnished by sense before they have been unified by the synthesis of the understanding' (*OED*) as well as on Riemann's mathematical modelling of multiple dimensions of time and space, and on structures such as 'the manyplies' (*OED*) of animal intestines or Frame's own 'wild bees' nest' (LM 118) that maximise surface area within a confined space. All of these figurations can be placed alongside Deleuze's theorisation of the fold in his work on Leibniz and the Baroque, which uses the concept of the monad to think foldedness as

a unity that envelops a multiplicity, this multiplicity developing the One in the manner of a 'series'. The One specifically has a power of envelopment and development; while the multiple is inseparable from the folds that it makes when it is enveloped, and of unfoldings when it is developed. (Deleuze, *The Fold*, 23)

As an individual unit each monad includes the whole series; hence it conveys the entire world, but does not express it without expressing more clearly a small region of the world, a 'subdivision', a borough of the city, a finite sequence. (Deleuze, *The Fold*, 25)

Frame's conceptualisation of writing consciousness in the manifold is that of the double becoming enacted by street level politics, transforming, by writing, the given, and the other way round. Not imagination *or* available language,

not conceptual freedom *or* social commitment, but 'AND ... AND ... AND' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, 98).

For Deleuze and Guattari, a concept has some of the characteristics of an image (although it must always be ready to take flight, to break up/out): it has a number of components; these components derive their meaning in relation to one another; to add or remove a component is to create a different entity; a concept has a history and potential links to other concepts, but is nevertheless a self-contained whole. Take for example an image of a bird as embodied flight: its components are feathers, wings, body conformation; the relations between these things combine to form something that is flying-bird-like. An image that does not contain the possibility of one of these components is not-flying-bird; there is a history of representations of flight which emphasises differing aspects eg gliding, and there are links to other images eg flying mammals, but the image of the flying bird does not need these things in order to exist. The defining component of Frame's concept of the manifold is its folded nature, which constructs an ontology of complexity, 'with-foldedness'. One characteristic of the 'wild bees' nest' structure is its capacity to dispose across its surfaces great quantities of experiential data — 'the sum of particulars furnished by sense' — without ordering them hierarchically. Another is its capacity to order and re-order the relations of its contents according to principles of connection determined by its builder — this point touches this (persons, objects, ideas, in time, in space) as I create a fold. The manifold as representation of subjectivity foregrounds a *mode of ordering* and relation of content.

Since Frame's conceptualisation of writing subjectivity is enacted by and in her work, the book is an embodiment of this subjectivity as described in her figuration of the manifold, which speaks of how 'there are some insects that carry a bulge of seed outside their body as the intelligence of the universe carries its planets and stars' (LM 117). Book-as-manifold-as-writing-subjectivity is an embodiment of the possibility of subjective change. The book becomes a soul like that described by Deleuze in *The Fold*. In this work

on folded spatiality in the Baroque, Deleuze reflects that 'inclusion or inherence is *the final cause of the fold*', and what it 'accomplishes' is 'necessarily a soul, a subject':

A soul always includes what it apprehends from *its* point of view, in other words, inflection. *Inflection is an ideal condition or a virtuality that currently exists only in the soul that envelops it.* Thus the soul is what has folds and is full of folds. (Deleuze, *The Fold*, 22)

Frame's manifold is a creation which both challenges and augments existing constructions: 'Concepts are centres of vibrations, each in itself and every one in relation to all the others. This is why they all resonate rather than cohere or correspond with each other' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 23). They are entities composed of elements extracted from chaos and ordered by means of internal relations of those elements. And while every concept is 'multiple' in this sense, there is no concept 'possessing every component, since this would be chaos pure and simple' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 15). The manifold is a little totality constructed by exclusion, 'cut out' from the rest of the universe.

Another feature of Deleuze and Guattari's formulation is their emphasis on the way concepts are created by individuals, 'signed' just as images are. These proper names — the Cartesian cogito; Bergsonian duration — become '*conceptual personae* who haunt a particular plane of consistency' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 24) as a style or cast of consciousness, and as witness to the historical nature of thought.<sup>2</sup> The Frame manifold, then is 'haunted' by the figure of the trickster-storyteller who creates a malleable style of consciousness, a habitation out of the substance of her own 'wild be(e)ing'. This activity is dictated by the absolute necessity of constructing a shelter for herself or dying: history throws up problems that demand the creation of new concepts, and new concepts raise questions that allow the

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<sup>2</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy describes the way in which 'such use of proper names ... imparts a "becoming-concept" to proper names ... and ... it imparts a "becoming-proper-name" to concepts ... To "bring to language" does not here mean to translate into language ... but it means to have *language bear the weight* of what is not' (Nancy 111).

determination of further problems. As a conceptual persona, the creator of a concept is a nexus — of ideas that form the concept's history, and of problems relating to those ideas, that urge themselves in the individual's historical moment. Frame's storyteller is a figure of late twentieth-century experience: she writes fluid evasions and subversions of totalising regimes; she is a postcolonial figuration of the construction of marginal space; she is a figure of the gender wars.

In creating concepts out of the necessities of her own place and moment, Frame alters the dynamic of the whole conceptualisation of subjectivity. To think difference using available language, out of particular experience, is to create a possibility not just in terms of what is brought into being, but of further differences that might be thought:

[Concepts] are not pieces of a jigsaw puzzle but rather the outcome of throws of the dice. They resonate nonetheless, and the philosophy that creates them always introduces a powerful Whole that, while remaining open, is not fragmented: an unlimited One-All, an "Omnitudo" that includes all the concepts on one and the same plane. It is a table, a plateau, or a slice; it is a plane of consistency or, more accurately, the plane of immanence of concepts, the planomenon. (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 35)

This plane of immanence, 'the single wave that rolls ... and unrolls' concepts' 'multiple waves' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 36), or 'the breath that suffuses the separate parts' of the 'skeletal frame' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 36) of concepts, is like the sum or whole of techniques and styles available to the maker of a work of art — tools, materials, technical traditions, subject matter. Thus Frame is a woman writing in the novelistic genre, in English, in the New Zealand of the second half of the twentieth century ... Just as this array of preconditions is not the work of art itself, so 'the plane of immanence is not a concept that is or can be thought but rather the image of



thought, the image thought gives itself of what it means to think' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 37) at a given time and place.

Frame, in her formulation of an adequate concept of subjectivity, integrates categories of thought, using art forms and concepts already available to her and interrelating them in a body of work. This interrelation models a way of bringing about subjective change. Through writing that is able to give experiences that 'state the problem', she provides a basis for the creation of concepts, arriving at a reformulation of 'what it means to think'. This in turn creates the conditions for further works of art, and so the movement continues. She models the possibility that what it means to think can change with time and with the formation of concepts, just as what it means to make a work of art will be influenced by technology and culture, for example by the appearance of film as a possible medium, or as a result of a prohibition on the depiction of living creatures (the bird disappears).

Having arrived at the figure/concept of the manifold, Frame undertakes another, related, conceptual reformulation of subjectivity which she articulates in terms of the 'hypotenuse'. Like the manifold, this figure could also be described as having the status of a concept, as a response to the problem for writing of finding both sufficient distance to create a narrative and staying experientially connected with what is written. If the concept of the manifold describes how writing-subjectivity works, the concept of the hypotenuse describes how it is maintained. The components of this concept as Frame creates it are figured in terms of geometry: the hypotenuse as the long side of a right-angled triangle which joins the other two sides, and has characteristics of both adjacency to the two angles formed with them, and opposition to the right angle they form. Thus the image figures the way a storyteller is burdened by tensions of connection between the worlds she writes, and experiential necessities that inform these worlds. The hypotenuse/storyteller's subjectivity is determined by, and yet subsumes, the other two (experiential) sides according to the formula  $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$ ; that is, the combined squares of the two shorter sides 'prove' equal to the square of the hypotenuse. The 'closing in' of

the triangle points to another tension inherent in the narrative function — the fact that bringing experience into speech is also an imprisoning, shepherding movement. The size, the position, the enclosed of a particular writing 'triangulation' is historically determined. The narrator of *Living in the Maniototo* puts it this way:

I am Hypotenuse.

Here burdened by the weight of opposite and adjacent  
proved equal to others, never to myself,

I square with myself for the satisfaction of others who count more than I  
who lie as thin as a garden line in my fleshless body  
who lie and square and cube and carry and join.

I am Hypotenuse. I close in

a shape that is nameless without my prison.

Larger than opposite and adjacent I yet suffer their corner-creating  
presence,

the shadows formed in the crook of our shepherded lives;  
the corner of the paddock where the fence is propped up, strained,  
the grass grows through the bright barbed wire; mushrooms appear  
overnight; the old horse stands to drop his hot cone of straw-filled  
manure.

I am Hypotenuse of a southern country. I fence, perhaps, a farm  
overlooking the Tasman.

Pages turn, touch my boundaries, black print, underlinings underlined.

(LM 70)

The concept has an etymological component too, in its meaning of 'stretching under': the adjacency or distancing effect is not, to return for a moment to Certeau's image of the city of language treated in Chapter One, a result of the scopic gaze of the city planner, but rather it is descriptive of a subjectivity located at the level of the pavement which supports those who walk 'down below'.

Frame's hypotenuse has been variously written about, usually approached via semiotic analysis, with each writer contributing to the body of knowledge about the image. Patrick Evans reads the hypotenuse as an exploration of 'the way artists try to express their vision without departing from the real world', holding together 'a base that represents life and a vertical that represents art' (Evans, *Meanjin*, 381). Dorothy Jones also subscribes to this view that 'it is the artist who, as hypotenuse, joins [life and art] and ... give shape to what was previously formless' (D. Jones 183). Karin Hansson, in her study of Frame's work as a challenge to Darwinian and Spencerian theories of evolution entitled *The Unstable Manifold*, takes the figure's semiotic potential a step further. Commenting on Frame's expressed fascination with synecdoche — 'the part representing the whole, the container for the thing contained' (McLeod 25) — she reads Frame's repeated use of triangular imagery, open as it is to varieties of interpretation and definition, as 'synecdochically modelling ... the incompleteness of human perception and the significance of point of view' (Hansson 68). Hansson argues that this 'incompleteness' 'can stand for self-centred assertion of authority and the rigidity of simplified and select representation' (Hansson 70). Gina Mercer, on the other hand, foregrounds the sign's effects, but takes the argument in a different direction. In the chapter 'Living in the Maniototo' from her *Subversive Fictions*, Mercer presents a diagrammatic 'Dance of the Seven Triangles' (Mercer, *Janet Frame*, 206) which offers seven differing readings of the base/vertical/hypotenuse elements of Frame's triangulations, and, commenting on Frame as 'maze mistress', says, 'you know how the maze mistress feels about oppositional dichotomies. Not a single one can go unchallenged' (Mercer, *Janet Frame*, 205). In the work of these writers, then, the hypotenuse begins to emerge as a figure, not of what an artist does, but of how she does it.

Approaching Frame's figurations in terms of their components, as in the preceding examples, contributes to the body of knowledge about the image. What such an approach does not take into account, however, is the beauty and

power of the form concepts take in Frame's writing, which lies in the fact that their details are instantaneously present *as images*, even when presented in words. This instantaneity is comparable to the movement to be found in a static visual image, in that all the possible relations between components are presented *at once*. Philosophical thought for Deleuze and Guattari is 'infinite movement or the movement of the infinite' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 37) on the plane of immanence: a concept is a thought-construct composed of instantaneous movements, connections that make themselves infinitely in the act of being formulated. The plane/plan delineates what can be thought at a given time: 'elements of the plane are *diagrammatic features*, whereas concepts are *intensive features*' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 39). New concepts modify or extend what it is possible to think. The 'intensive' details of Frame's image/concepts modify an area of the 'diagram' of thought.

Frame creates her concepts in response to pressing philosophical problems, but the pattern of their details could in no way be predicted from the nature of the problems themselves. Deleuze and Guattari have a formulation of what it is that determines the 'intensive features' characteristic of a project or a body of work. For them, concepts cannot be 'deduced' from the plane, any more than a work of art can be deduced from the range of tools and techniques available to an artist. 'Their correspondence goes beyond even simple resonances and introduces instances adjunct to the creation of concepts, namely, conceptual personae' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 40). As a determinant of conceptual 'textures', in Frame's work, the trickster-survivor-storyteller ensures that 'intensive features' of her concepts will be informed by those personal and historical necessities that I have noted as characteristic of a particular moment of modernism: the need to be connected but to resist being subsumed entirely, the need to create a 'home' but also to keep moving.

Because the philosopher-artist is a kind of bottleneck of historical forces that result in the formation of a particular understanding of what it means to think, Deleuze and Guattari describe the plane of immanence as 'prephilosophical'

(Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 40). The layout of the plane is determined by a confluence of available ideas with the thinking processes of individuals who bring philosophical thought to bear on it. The history of the creation of concepts proceeds along lines that follow the resistances and passions of individuals who, as artists encountering problems of technique (Frame as writer, subject to the restrictions of genre, living in a postcolonial society etc) and subject matter (eg how to create a *becoming-mad* in late twentieth century New Zealand and still get books published), construct new images in response to problems of thought that have most urgency for them:

Precisely because the plane of immanence is prephilosophical and does not immediately take effect with concepts, it implies a sort of groping experimentation and its layout resorts to measures that are not very respectable, rational, or reasonable. These measures belong to the order of dreams, of pathological processes, esoteric experiences, drunkenness, and excess ... To think is always to follow the witch's flight. (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 41)

The trickster-storyteller is precisely the one who is in a position to take whatever 'not very respectable, rational or reasonable' measures are necessary in order to formulate ideas adequate to subjective (outsider) experience. Thinking as creation of concepts is dangerous because it involves encounters with the 'unthinkable' in every sense of the word:

it becomes a case of obvious consequences when pure immanence provokes a strong, instinctive disapproval in public opinion, and the nature of the created concepts strengthens this disapproval. (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 42)

To remember that thought in Frame's work is informed by survivor-trickster consciousness is to be reminded that the whole writing project is one of self-transformation: she survived, and made a place in which she could survive, by writing. What could not be thought is brought into consciousness, and

consciousness both as diagram and as intension is changed irrevocably: 'one does not think without becoming something else' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 42). The history of philosophical thought can be understood as a history of danger, because it is the resistances of the plane — 'problems which are thought to be badly understood or badly posed' — which have been the instances for the creation of concepts. Frame herself images the place where a writer lives and works in terms of the area in New Zealand known as 'The Maniototo':

'unforgettable landscapes composed of severe lines and blocks and planes; their stark geometry uninterrupted ... an extensive surface from which most of the cover has been stripped to reveal the schist and old greywacke undermass ... the Maniototo plain ... mania, a plain: toto, bloody'. (LM 8)

Frame's Maniototo is her own historical problem and her response to that problem. It is a diagram of subjective experience at a particular moment, and the concept-lives that unfold on it are adaptations and challenges to it. Frame as trickster-storyteller warns that challenges such as the creation of concepts are not without danger. They may invoke annihilating responses that arise out of the dynamics of the plane, as in the case of the jeweller Tommy of *Living in the Maniototo*, whose creation of 'tiny worlds' (LM 33) leads to his destruction by 'a Blue Fury ... as if a fire from the center of the earth ... had at last been forced through into an overtaking of the visible world' (LM 38). But nowhere does she suggest that dangers and rewards of negotiating subjective problems originate from anywhere but the plane itself.

In a century in which the near-destruction of entire populations has resulted from a desire to force them into alignment with totalising world-views, a problem confronting philosophy, according to Deleuze and Guattari, has been the question of transcendence, with its attendant power to give (divine) sanction to concepts. Philosophical thought is caught between the risk, at one extreme, of understanding its role as 'providing pleasant or aggressive dinner

conversation' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 144), and at the other, of instituting the transcendence of a God and a divine order to which creation must be subjected. Deleuze and Guattari's introduction of a plane of immanence that is 'no longer immanent to something other than itself' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 47) is a way of thinking about artistic endeavour that brings attention back to the role of thought as a creative modality which 'invents modes of existence or possibilities of life' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 72). Like any artist's creation, the self-referentiality of the plane of immanence directs focus to what is happening within its slice or 'section of chaos' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 42), which 'presents only events, that is, possible worlds as concepts' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 47). No 'outside' can be called upon as guarantor, since the conceptual persona is an inhabitant of the plane. Contingency can be acknowledged — each plane is *an* image of thought — as the very ground for experiments in knowledge which are related to pressing historical needs. Frame as a proper name, an Other on the plane of immanence, is the sign of a place of experiment in becoming, a possible world:

The destiny of the philosopher is to become his conceptual persona or personae, at the same time that these personae themselves become something other than what they are historically, mythologically or commonly ... The conceptual persona is the becoming or the subject of a philosophy. (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 64)

Because of the myth that surrounds her life, Frame as proper name is inseparable from the style of being I have described as trickster/survivor-storyteller, and in this sense she fulfils what Deleuze and Guattari describe as '*The role of conceptual persona ... to show thought's territories*' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 69), the qualities of the plane of immanence indicated by the style or flavour of the features called forth in interaction with it. The trickster-storyteller connects with other territories of thought, too, other moments of the plane, through the questions it raises: how does this style

connect with other styles; what is its manner of proceeding; what does it claim as uniquely its own; onto what renewed possibilities of life does it open?

Conceptual personae constitute points of view according to which planes of immanence are distinguished from one another or brought together, but they also constitute the conditions under which each plane finds itself filled with concepts of the same group. (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 75)

Frame conjures the trickster-storyteller as the animating spirit of an experimental style of thought, like a visual artist working through a stylistic mode (the pink period, the blue period) that explores the potentialities of available materials and techniques. An individual thinker may create a number of conceptual personae, and in fact Frame may be in the process of formulating another, since she has said in a 1988 interview after the publication of *The Carpathians* that she felt ready for a move away from 'novels that feature novelists writing novels' (Alley and Williams 50). She may be engaged in 'laying out, inventing, and creating ... diagrammatic, personalistic and intensive features' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 77) of a renewed plane that has resulted from her previous creation (and survival of the creation) of conceptual 'worlds'. The cunning of the survivor-persona working with and against the resistances and aptitudes of the given, that is, prevailing 'free opinion' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 79) creates changed conditions of thought, which necessitates the appearance of a new persona. This process is described by Deleuze and Guattari as 'geophilosophy' — a continual cutting out of new territories from chaos, and the return of the 'stifling' 'present relative milieu' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 100) to chaos in order to re-form it: deterritorialising flash that permits creation of a u-topos. Or as Frame puts it: 'the whole world with everything broken by the gravity star but not lost. Everything ... to be renewed, rebuilt, selves, thought, language, everything' (Alley and Williams 48).



As well as being 'haunted' by the shape-shifting figure of the storyteller, the realm(s) created by the novels of Janet Frame are also populated — literally characterised — by other figures relating to the sensations and descriptions proper to those modes of thought that belong to the narrative itself. Just as the invisible presence of the storyteller is often, but not invariably, materialised as a character or characters in each novel, so these other presences sometimes make their appearance, though not invariably and not always centre-stage. The mode of thought that marks moments of subjective change and produces images that describe something leaving one system of references and entering another is characterised by the implied presence of one who observes each specific change as it occurs. The presence of the observer marks a movement like that described in Pierre Macherey's Deleuzian analysis of Spinoza in which 'the transition to freedom'

operates mainly through our imagination, developing a real *ars imaginandi* that involves passing from the state where one imagines 'simply', *simpliciter* ... to a state where one imagines 'vividly and more distinctly', *vivide et distinctus*, more intelligently ... a transformation of the workings of imagination that progressively eliminates their passive aspects, bringing them ever closer to a production of adequate ideas (Macherey 154–55)

Using Deleuze and Guattari's definition, the mode of observation is characteristic of Frame-the-scientist, present as observer of differentiations in the plane of reference. Where the (impossible) human/historical presence on a plane of immanence takes the form of a 'haunting' by conceptual personae, by contrast, the human/historical connection with a plane of reference is made by 'partial observers in relation to functions' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 129). Sometimes this presence is made explicit in characters such as Thora Pattern of *The Edge of the Alphabet*, who 'have acquired a special interest and skill in being a compass for others ... [appearing] at crossroads, at the entrance to mazes, on the outskirts of cities, at the edge of the alphabet' (EA 266), or Mattina Brecon of *The Carpathians*, who observes and reports the effects of

the Gravity Star. Sometimes the presence remains implicit, as in *A State of Siege*, where Malfred Signal's epiphanic experience of new language is described by a narrator as elusive as the 'Anyone from Anywhere' (SS 58) who brings the message.

Frame-as-scientist, as observer-describer 'draws up paradigms' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 124) that give direction to narratives that emerge across the body of her work. Images of the asylum-hive and the wild bees' nest are part of the same paradigmatic framework, where the substitution of the latter's fullness for the former's anguished poverty provides a vector, offering subjective guidance that 'give[s] warning to the lost children and the tired eldest son out to seek his fortune' (EA 266). As paradigmatic entities, images created by the observer are 'figures defined by a spiritual tension rather than by a spatial intuition' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 25). The sensations created by Frame-the-artist assign values to directions of axes and to movements through sets of coordinates — 'higher', 'lower', 'faster', 'further', 'less pain this way'. As witness of moments of subjective change, Frame's observer-role is 'to perceive and to experience' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 130) things and bodies in a way that modifies and nuances them, to the point where, (as for Thora Pattern of *The Edge of the Alphabet*: 'I made a journey of discovery through the lives of three people' (EA 4) or Mattina Brecon of *The Carpathians*, caught in the breakup of 'the whole world'), observation and experience are one: 'ideal partial observers are the perceptions or sensory affections of functions themselves' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 131). Observation of this kind is just as dangerous as storytelling. If Frame the storyteller carries out a kind of astral projection, haunting the territories of available thought and language, Frame the observer allows herself to be possessed by 'points of view in things themselves' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 132), entering completely into the moment.

'Far from forcing us to pass through the same components again, the function of the scientist's proper name is to spare us from doing this' (Deleuze and

Guattari, *Philosophy*, 125). The observer differentiates: we know incarceration (noun-form), let's look at inhabiting (verb-form).<sup>3</sup> Where the trickster-storyteller is cunning, resourceful, a bit ruthless in her concern to find a bolt-hole, the observer-describer is interested, concerned that the pattern should work out well: there are "styles" associated with proper names' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 128) here too. The observer and the storyteller are alike, in that the features of the plane of immanence and the variables of the plane of reference are both determined by their passions and 'tastes' formed in the context of problems/events of a particular historical moment. Guided by necessities of problems that inform her entire project, Frame as philosopher-storyteller creates concept-images — the manifold, the hypotenuse — that 'continually extract a consistent event from the state of affairs — a smile without the cat, as it were' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 126). *Here's an image that gives an idea of how to keep escaping*, she says. *Here's another that gives a way to connect and delineate without being trapped*. Frame the scientist-observer, guided by the same necessities, 'continually actualizes the event in a state of affairs, thing or body that can be referred to' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 126). *Here's an image of the problem we're faced with*, she says. *And here's another way, see?*

Frame says of her novels that they are 'explorations in the sense [of] ... seeing what pattern emerges' (Alley and Williams 46). Both storyteller and observer act in the service of 'an *I do not know* that has become positive and creative, the condition of creation itself' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 128). Frame's expressed 'fascination' (McLeod 25) with the idea of synecdoche — the part for the whole, offers a way of thinking about how the 'pattern' is generated in Frame's writing practice. Commenting on the 'interesting affinities' of Frame's work with products of the fractal theories of Benoit Mandelbrot, Karin Hansson accurately describes novels such as *The Carpathians* as 'a system of self-similar objects whose components resemble

<sup>3</sup> The observer function can be understood as operating to produce something comparable to Certeau's "microhistories" of interpretation' as described by Jeremy Ahearn with regard to mystic texts. 'The very circulation of such texts leaves traces through which Certeau induces the existence of different "interpretative communities" ... Surin's letter for Certeau works as an "Ariadne's thread", whose circulation points up — or "develops" in a quasi-photographic sense — a "map of spiritual centres"' [Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 221] (Ahearn 122–23).

the whole in progressively smaller scales' (Hansson 68). Mandelbrot's patterns are generated from a single mathematical 'seed' formula such as  $Z \Rightarrow z^2 + c$  that continually feeds back into itself. Similarly, Frame's writing practice can be thought of as generating itself from 'seed' sensations and observations which assemble themselves, via the organisation of fabulation, into ever more complex patterns while remaining synecdochically autonomous. Further, the seed sensation or observation does not 'know' in advance or predetermine the form of the larger pattern; it is characterised by an indeterminacy like that demonstrated in chaos theory models — the butterfly flaps its wings in Auckland and there's a hurricane in New York. The observer-describer feels her way, constructs her way toward the event, as Mandelbrot's precursor did in the early years of the twentieth century, making guess-sketches of fractal shapes based on equations that could only be completed with the advent of computers; creating lines of flight in the space of uncertainty around whether what her story traces is a continental faultline or the crack in a pebble. In producing its concepts, fabulation embodies "a chaoid state" ... [a] transformation of chaos into "chaosmos," chaos become Thought' (Ruthrof 567).

So far I have discussed Frame-as-storyteller, a figure who 'haunts' the images of the manifold and the hypotenuse which are constructed responses to the idea/problem of subjective entrapment within available language; and Frame-as-observer, creating images that summarise and solve problems of narrative direction. But it is sensations created by Frame-as-artist that provide the conviction that motivates both observation and storytelling. Sensations too, however, must be located in a human/historical context if they are not merely to replicate the chaos they seek to approach: they must be had *by someone*. Daphne Withers of *Owls Do Cry* (1957), Istina Mavet of *Faces in the Water* (1961), Zoe Bryce of *The Edge of the Alphabet* (1962), Erlene/Vera Glace of *Scented Gardens for the Blind* (1963), Aisley Maude of *The Adaptable Man* (1965), Malfred Signal of *A State of Siege* (1966), Godfrey Rainbird of *Yellow Flowers in the Antipodean Room* (1968), Milly Galbraith of *Intensive Care* (1970), Turnlung of *Daughter Buffalo* (1972), Mavis Halleton of *Living*

in the *Maniototo* (1979) and Mattina Brecon of *The Carpathians* (1988) are all examples of figures who act as locations where sensation occurs.

(Increasingly over the course of the novels, characters act as more than one kind of figure, and finish, as in the case of Mavis Halleton or Mattina Brecon by acting as all three — undergoing, observing and fabulating experience.)

Deleuze and Guattari arrive at an understanding of 'the aesthetic figure' as a human embodiment of the necessities/longings arising from specific historical conditions. Aesthetic figures give 'a body, a life, a universe to the virtual event ... These universes are neither virtual nor actual; they are possibles' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 177). Aesthetic figures organise universes of the possible by their manner of inhabiting them. Vibration, embrace, division of sensation alone 'would be an interference or chaos, were there not a second element to make the flesh hold fast' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 179). Characters from the novels listed above offer a manner of inhabiting, an organising style of experience that turns a universe of sensation into a livable space, a 'house (or an equivalent, a spring, a grove)' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 179). Frame is obsessed with figuring the lived space of experience: the rubbish dump of *Owls Do Cry* where the Withers children find their subjective 'treasure'; the literal incarceration suffered in the Brick Building of *Faces in the Water*; the 'vacant lot ... or ... oasis' (EA 300) where Thora lives in *The Edge of the Alphabet*; the rooms inhabited by Erlene/Vera in *Scented Gardens for the Blind*; Godfrey's sense of 'burial alive' (YF 59) in *Yellow Flowers*; the hospitals and Milly's 'place ... just to be' (IC 293) under the Livingstone pear tree in *Intensive Care*; the zoo enclosure in *Daughter Buffalo*; the 'house of replicas' (LM 17) of *Living in the Maniototo*; the overturned space of habitation in *The Carpathians*.

Because Frame's work consists in a movement towards creating and recording the possibility of subjective change, I call the ground she works from the plane of subjectivity, following Deleuze and Guattari's model of the actualisation of possibles. This plane, composed of the sum of possible experiences of what it means to be a self in the world is Frame's *materia*

*prima*, from which she draws and manipulates varieties of human experience of selfhood — sensation, observation and fabulation. The most frequently encountered figures on this plane are those who convey subjective sensations, and where, as is often the case, figures play more than one role, it is sensation that is foregrounded, either chronologically or experientially, because it is by means of sensation that shifts in subjectivity are motivated and anchored. Delight, fear, longing can only be properly registered in terms of sensation, even if they arise in response to the emergence of a narrative connection or the accuracy of an observation. This is the purpose of Frame's work: to signal and 'contract' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 211) on its plane of subjectivity lines of flight towards the next necessary experience of a possible self, a camp not determined by its structures but by the journey towards it and by the terrain; a camp for 'a people to come'. From these 'dwelling places' of sensation, a survivable approach can be made to the cosmos of subjective experience, 'the single great plane, the coloured void' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 180), white (or black) noise.

The French window, as in Matisse, now opens only onto an area of plain, uniform black. The flesh, or rather the figure, is no longer the inhabitant of the place, of the house, but of the universe that supports the house (becoming). *It is like a passage from the finite to the infinite*, but also from territory to deterritorialization. (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 180)

Frame's figures, those young girls and marginalised women and men who hear and feel and taste and smell and see their own predicaments and who slowly, novel by novel, whisper directions back and forth to one another are making little camps, little territories with the earth of the bloody plain, the Maniototo, all around, making use of forces that belong to the earth, making them visible, audible. Characters such as Istina in the asylum and Zoe in the crowd on board ship and Mavis on the streets of Baltimore and Mattina in a small town in 'little ole Noo Zealand' (TC 20) create percepts — becoming-forces of the earth of available subjectivity — from their experiences and

observations and stories about 'gravity, heaviness, rotation, the vortex, expansion, germination, and time' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 182) in that realm. These and other characters create affects too — becoming-responses, becoming-bodies in the clench of those forces; 'animal, plant, and molecular becomings [which] correspond to cosmic or cosmogenetic forces' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 183). Strings of sensations and observations followed by responses, adjustments, narrative commentaries. Istina's oppression in *Faces in the Water* followed by Thora's weed-speech from the edge of the alphabet followed by Erlene's silent becoming-insect conversations with Uncle Blackbeetle in *Scented Gardens for the Blind*; Milly finding her place under the Livingstone pear tree, that 'has [its] own speech' (IC 249) in *Intensive Care* followed by Turnlung's ever closer identification with difference, becoming-other, figured as connection with his 'daughter' the buffalo calf.

House, camp as an experiment in dwelling, using the forces of the plane to survive the plane: 'perhaps art begins with the animal, at least with the animal that carves out a territory and constructs a house (both are correlative, or even one and the same, in what is called a habitat)' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 183). Frame-the-writer through her novels creates houses in the plane of subjectivity, figuring the becoming-plant and becoming-animal of her characters as she learns these skills herself, like an animal transforming 'organic functions — sexuality, procreation, aggression, feeding [into] sensibilia that cease to be merely functional and become expressive features' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 183). And within and across the novels, like 'the songs and cries that mark out the territory' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 184) of an animal, there are repeated structures, patterns, images — 'refrains ... The whole of the refrain is the being of sensation. Monuments are refrains' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 184).

Accumulating across the body of Frame's work, the subjective becomings created by her refrains form a counterpoint to already constituted forces, her own camps and those of others on the plane of subjectivity: 'There is a

counterpoint whenever a melody arises as a "motif" within another melody, as in the marriage of bumblebee and snapdragon' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 185). But counterpoint effects are an organisation of the plane in themselves, since the plane/plain is syntagmatic — a change anywhere is a change everywhere. Working with standard language and causing it to vibrate, coalesce and form distinct compounds, installing observers, image-makers, storytellers within its structures, Frame-as-writer redefines what is standard and reorganises subjectivity (what is and what isn't considered chaotic) in the process. And though the plane of subjectivity is always the plane of a particular time and place (New Zealand, late twentieth century ...) as are its camps, nevertheless there is 'another aspect, an infinite symphonic plane of composition ... from House to universe' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 186). The universe is syntagmatic too — a book or a beetle moves in New Zealand and a storm builds half a world away — 'becoming is always double'. The trickster storyteller might escape on her own account, but her action has collective consequences.

Subjectivity as embodied in Frame's art — a complex of desire and response which itself becomes a motif within an infinite play of forces, bumblebee in a snapdragon cosmos: 'finite melodic compounds and the great infinite plane of composition, the small and large refrain' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 186). The known is transformed from within in the creation of a single novel or a body of work, and it is transformed from without by recognition that whatever is known always exists in relation to 'the great Refrain, the phrase of the septet in perpetual metamorphosis, the song of the universe' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 189) which sweeps up 'all the tunes, all the little framing or framed refrains— childish, domestic, professional, national, territorial' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 191). Each novel, each life's work is a 'little tune', no matter what effort went into Framing it, understood as a moment that will be succeeded by another moment in a process which 'consists in deframing, in finding the opening, taking up the plane of composition once more' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 191). Frame takes up the plane again and again as each camp is appropriated, overrun by



opinion (including or especially her own), and because in any case, each camp is established in response to a particular problem, sensation, event that requires its own 'celebration'. Movement on the plane of subjectivity is a flight of refugees. Frame deploys each mode of thought to construct models in language of possible subjective changes that exist between 'two extreme dangers: either leading us back to the opinion from which we wanted to escape or precipitating us into the chaos we wanted to confront' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 199).

Frame's first novel, *Owls Do Cry* (1957) sets up the figure of the girl on the edge of adulthood as a foundational locus, offering her sensations and proto-observations as motivation for all the work to come. Early novels reiterate this emphasis by their setting within an extension of the same social (*Faces in the Water*) or familial (*The Edge of the Alphabet*) structure as *Owls Do Cry* or by reinstating the young girl herself at the centre of the narrative (*Scented Gardens for the Blind*). The girl is the starting point of the necessity of change with respect to available subjectivity, a necessity imaged as capture by standard language. This foregrounding of the young girl resonates with the figure of the girl in Deleuze and Guattari:

Because the girl must become a woman, she is invoked as the becoming of becoming. Man is traditionally defined as *being*: as the self-evident ground of a politics of identity and recognition. Woman, as his other, offers the opening of becoming; and the girl thus functions as a way of thinking woman, not as a complementary *being*, but as the instability that surrounds any being. For a being — an entity, identity or subject — is always the effect of a universal becoming. What makes this becoming girl-like? its radical relation to man: not as his other or opposite (woman) but as the very becoming of man's other. (Colebrook 2)

Later novels, in addition to having girl characters, have girls who are explicitly figured in terms of becoming-other: Milly Galbraith, 'dull-normal' (IC 224), the 'poor girl' (IC 216) of *Intensive Care* (1970) is perceived as 'a

creature ... like a rabbit or hedgehog or elf ... exist[ing] in a moment of twilight ... with plants and animals' (IC 223); Turnlung of *Daughter Buffalo* (1972) has 'only one daughter, a furry buffalo of six months, already trained to bewilderment, immobility' (DB 122) to whom he hopes to offer 'proper training and education [so that] ... she shall not be tricked or threatened by words' (DB 147); *Living in the Maniototo* (1979) has three wolf-girls, 'barking, yelping, whimpering' (LM 122) and howling 'the sounds but not the shape of human speech' (LM 217). The culmination of this continuum of estrangement of subjective experience with regard to language, from marginalised girl, to girl 'like' an animal, to animal girl, to multiple animal-girls is the moment in *The Carpathians* (1988), when a whole street loses human speech and begins to scream, shriek, wail 'like the first cries of those who had never known or spoken words' (TC 126).

In Chapter One I discussed the girl's subjective experience of the collision between imagination and available language and subsequent silencing and disempowerment as motivation and thematic preoccupation for subjective change across the body of Frame's work. In this chapter I have begun a discussion, using Deleuze and Guattari's analysis of creative thought, of how Frame structures her offering of the girl's experiences and responses in terms of sensation, observation and narrative organisation. Making use of the set of resonances between Frame and Deleuze and Guattari relating to their conceptualisation of becoming as occurring via the subjectivity of the young girl, I want now to explore the idea of Frame's work as a project that enacts becoming *as a writing practice* that is signed and motivated by the girl's presence as a marginalised figure. This writing practice can be read in terms of Deleuze and Guattari's category of minor literature, a category which both articulates and enacts the construction of writing subjectivity as a site of becoming. This, then, is another site of double becoming: I theorise creativity in general in order to make possible a re-theorisation of Frame.

In creating the concept of becoming, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari make the girl (who has appeared already in *The Logic of Sense*) its conceptual persona, since in a European 'social field'

the girl's becoming is stolen first, in order to impose a history, or prehistory upon her. The boy's turn comes next, but it is by using the girl as an example, by pointing to the girl as the object of his desire, that ... a dominant history is fabricated for him too. (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, 276)

Their analysis of evasions of the 'dominant history' elaborates an idea of 'minoritarian' subversions of standard language, 'becomings' in which the girl is 'an abstract line, or a line of flight' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, 277), from the 'majoritarian' or 'man-standard' since 'man is majoritarian par excellence, whereas becomings are minoritarian ... majority ... referring not to a greater relative quantity but to the determination of a state or standard' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, 291). Girlhood is the place of an originary theft of becoming that steals the possibility of experience as a 'serialism' that 'graduate[s] characteristics according to their resemblances', and locks subjectivity into a 'structuralism' that 'orders' characteristics 'according to their differences' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, 239). In response to the question *What is a line of flight? or What is becoming?* Deleuze and Guattari point to the girl, to indicate that becoming is a refusal of theft, diminishment. *There are other possibilities*, they say, and these possibilities involve the embodiment of non-standard experience.

As a general project, then, becoming is minoritarian, as witnessed by the girl as figure of non-standard subjectivity. Specific becomings can have their witnesses, too, since identity for Deleuze

does not require any binary opposition to or identity within the self, and yet the modes of subverting normative models which he privileges —

figures like the girl, nomad or becoming-woman M themselves suggest alterity to a norm. (Driscoll 66)

In *What Is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari offer the figure of the 'old man' as one who haunts thought itself as a mode of becoming, whether in philosophy, science or art. They point to the 'sovereign freedom [of] a pure necessity' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 1) that characterises the old man: facing resumption by that which returns all opinion to chaos, he 'enjoys a moment of freedom between life and death' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 1). The old man provides a location, a motivation for thought-becoming, showing conditions under which thought can take a line of flight from the man-standard: thought as an instance in which becoming demonstrates its minoritarian possibilities. Thought, freed for lines of flight by mortal forces, its movement always 'refer[ring] back to a chaos' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Philosophy*, 208).

Becoming as a minoritarian project, and thought as a mode of becoming with its own style or persona — these two ideas resonate with or combine to form a third elaborated by Deleuze and Guattari in their work on Kafka — that of minor literature, thought-becoming-writing. Following a further devolution relating to style, they point to 'Kafka' as the figure who haunts this concept: a Jewish, Czech-speaking writer in German, he is an outsider-practitioner of a dominant language, who through what Deleuze and Guattari describe as unremitting 'sobriety' causes the poverty of his community's German to 'vibrate'. The characteristics of the standard language, and of the linguistic outside from which he comes, determine the characteristics of his 'lines of flight' as a writer. Minor literature is a form of writing which wrestles a dominant language into another key, into modes of subjectivity that have not formerly been proper to it: 'A minor literature doesn't come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 16).

[The] first characteristic of minor literature ... is that in it language is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization. ... [It] marks the impasse that bars access to writing ... and turns ... literature into something impossible — the impossibility of not writing, the impossibility of writing [in the standard language], the impossibility of writing otherwise. (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 16)

For a variety of reasons, Kafka is, as Vincent O'Sullivan suggests, 'the most obvious modern writer to set next to Frame' (O'Sullivan 25). It's not merely the 'unsourced' sense of doom' in Frame's work as described by O'Sullivan, or the presence in her novels of talking beetles and Castle-like institutions. Frame makes use of New Zealand English as 'a deterritorialised language, appropriate for strange and minor uses' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 17). New Zealand English is a language in revolt against itself, its perfectly learned and frantically adhered-to Home-based idioms succumbing to betrayal from within by 'Polynesian intonations' (*LM* 191). What to do about that accent, with its 'pleasant neutrality, as if it had been suitably "fixed" or "altered" like a cat' (*LM* 191) and which underlines an 'irreducible distance'? Frame writes it in, implicitly and explicitly, in the flat exchanges of conversation and in the 'special spelling' of language making its line of flight through characters like Milly Galbraith, 'doll-normill' (*IC* 224). She writes-in its vocabulary too, marking the language as deterritorialised with respect to time, place and culture:

the lost language of another age, the keepsakes, paddocks, creeks,  
death-beds ... in Kowhai Street, Puamahara, Maharawhenua.

Tena koutou.

Haere mai.

E pare ra. (*LM* 33)

Here are signs of the colonial 'impasse' that 'bars access to writing' — that accent, those words that belong to a place that is not the centre. Here is one aspect of 'the impossibility of not writing, the impossibility of writing'.

Frame has New Zealand English, but what is her account of how it finds its way into a writing practice? In a discussion of how deterritorialisation of language comes about, Deleuze and Guattari describe their sense of how

language always implies a deterritorialisation of the mouth, the tongue and the teeth ... in giving themselves over [from food] to the articulation of sounds ... but writing goes further in transforming words into things capable of competing with food' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 19)

Frame too, in the description given by the subject of *To the Is-Land* of the process by which she was forced to begin her experiments in machine relations, in writing-adjacency, describes it as one in which she lost the agency proper to the mouth and to teeth, finding herself at the limits of both speech and nourishment. Frame's subject has been relegated as a child to the category of subhumanity with the 'known "dirty and poor"' (TIL 49) — she is an animal-girl from the start. In a movement of reappropriation that acts like a zoom shot, Frame figures the animal-girl's mouth, deterritorialised as it already is by (available) language, as agent of a reversal of the process through a deterritorialising of available language:

I angled the duchess mirror to contemplate the horror of my decayed teeth. There was no escape from them ... I arranged an appointment with Mrs R ... with the intention of asking her to help me with arrangements for having my teeth extracted ... but when I presented myself at her house ... sensing the impossibility of being able to explain my plight, I, standing there (mouth closed) ... again turned on my 'schizophrenia' at full flow ... it was several weeks before I could say that my urgent problem was my decaying teeth. Mrs R kindly arranged for me to have my teeth extracted ... she would come with me, she said, and might it not be a good idea for me to admit myself ... to Sunnyside Mental Hospital ... I woke toothless and was admitted to Sunnyside Hospital and I was given the new electric treatment, and suddenly my life was thrown out of focus. I could not remember. I was terrified. I behaved as others

around me behaved. I who had learned the language, spoke and acted that language. (AMT 94–95)

Decaying words, decaying teeth, and a removal to a place where, following the reterritorialising of language by the mouth, ‘something happens’ (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 20), so that among ‘the raging mass of people performing their violent orchestration of unreason that seemed like a new music of curse or cry with the undertone of silence flowing from the quiet ones’ (FW 90), ‘a fluid language’ can emerge, that ‘will allow ... the possibility of invention’ (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 20). This is a transformation that occurs out of profoundest necessity. For Frame, writing becomes food when the world of meat has been taken away:

*Language stops being representative in order to now move towards its extremities or its limits. The connotation of pain accompanies this metamorphosis. (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 23).*

If Frame’s work is, as I am suggesting, an articulation of how a writing subjectivity might be constructed, this is a moment of extremity that figures a double becoming — both an inception of writing as minor literature and its method of proceeding. In Frame’s writing, passages dealing with childhood as a realm anterior to the theft of becoming are full of experiences in which ‘fluid language’

... torn from sense, conquering sense, bringing about an active neutralization, no longer finds its value in anything but an accenting of the word ... repeating a word, the sense of which is only vaguely felt, in order to make it vibrate around itself... to make it take flight on a line of non-sense. (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 21)

In a passage of the autobiography dealing with early childhood, Frame describes her responses to language as part of a familial pattern, beginning with her mother’s ‘lifelong repetition of names important to her — Henry

Wadsworth Longfellow, Harriet Beecher Stowe [which] never failed to awaken a sense of magic' (TIL 14). She goes on to relate instances of her use or reception of words and phrases for their sensory qualities or deterritorialising effect:

I sang, "God Save our Gracious *Tin*." I drank "Mook." (TIL 15)

my chief place of call was the lolly shop with its notice *High Class Confectionery*, which I read as *High Glass Confectionery*, kept by Miss Bee and her sister, also a Miss Bee. How I puzzled over their names and their origins and the meaning and appearance of their *High Glass*! (TIL 45)

His insistence that we sweep the "skirting boards" gave me a new, interesting word: skirting boards. Another new word ... was *wainscot*. (TIL 49)

*Rattan*, a word that was new to me but that remains memorable in my life with *decide*, *destination*, *adventure*, *permanent wave*, *OK*, *skirting board*, *wainscot*, and others. (TIL 97)

When the search for new language begins, an experiment has already been set up, in the pressure-cooker of the asylum's Brick Building, using 'this procedure' that 'actively neutralizes ... sense so that there remains only enough to direct lines of escape' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 21). In *A State of Siege*, the retired teacher Malfred Signal's search for a 'new view' ends when a stone wrapped in newspaper is thrown through her window by some unknown person or force which could, as she says, be 'anyone from anywhere': 'the news ... was not in any language she had learned: Soltrin, carmew, desse puniform wingering brime ... who and done whone, whone' (SS 197-98). In the world of deterritorialised language 'there is no longer any proper sense or figurative sense, but only a distribution of states that is part of the range of the word ... the words ... in their own way climb about ... roam



around' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 22) The 'news' comprises words that act as 'a ladder or a circuit of intensities that one can make race around ... The image is this very race itself; it has become becoming' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 22). Once signification has been abolished in this way, 'there is no longer a subject of the enunciation remaining "like"' (a retired schoolteacher in search of a New View), nor is there any longer 'a subject of the statement who is' (Anyone from Anywhere) — 'Rather there is a circuit of intensities that forms a mutual becoming' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 22). Malfred Signal/single dies as a separate entity after receiving 'last century's or tomorrow's news' (SS 198), and enters 'the heart of a necessarily multiple or collective assemblage' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 22).

In *A State of Siege*, Frame further articulates both the procedure by which language is rendered fluid, and the effects of this procedure. We can add this understanding to a reading of the ways in which she makes New Zealand English 'roam around' a circuit of becoming. So, the speech of Amy Withers to her children, 'No child of mine, no child of mine' (ODC 12) turns inside out in a repetition that makes it 'vibrate around itself'. When the 'little old oracle' Vera Glace of *Scented Gardens for the Blind* finally speaks, the first words of her new 'language of humanity' are a cry of pain: 'Ug-g-Ug. Ohhh Ohh g. Ugg' (SGB 252). The poverty which drives Frame's writing 'toward linguistic limits' is characterised by cliché and by the circumscription it denotes regarding the experiences of her characters. Frame takes over 'these marks of the poverty of a language' as Deleuze and Guattari describe Kafka taking over the poverty of the German spoken in Prague, in an act of 'creative utilization for the purposes of a new sobriety, a new expressivity, a new intensity' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 23).

Minor literature finds its place in the language of a great literature, Deleuze and Guattari suggest, in two ways. One is 'to swell [the language] up through all the resources of symbolism, of oneirism, of esoteric sense, of a hidden signifier' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 19). The other way is to opt for the very poverty of linguistic conditions that brought about a desire to escape in

the first place: 'Since language is arid, make it vibrate with a new intensity' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 19). Both these movements are apparent in Frame from the start. *Owls Do Cry* has effects of 'exhilaration and overdetermination' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 19) in Daphne's songs from 'the dead room' where she is to be made wooden by the lobotomising power of apollonian Law. Alongside this is set the dryness and sobriety, instanced earlier — a willed poverty of expression that has its own mesmerising rhythm. These two lines of flight are to be found together again and again.

Throughout Frame's novels, there is a movement away from exhilaration and towards linguistic sobriety. Whatever extraordinary events may occur on the streets of its towns, in the rooms of its houses, language will move at walking pace and confine itself to observation rather than commentary. The world's alphabets may precipitate and fall in a midnight rain composed of shit and jewels, but the occurrence will be reported soberly. Deleuze and Guattari offer a way of thinking about this 'sobriety' of language through their use of Henri Gobard's 'tetralinguistic model'. This model (in best structuralist categorising style) proposes four language functions that can exist within a given language:

vernacular, maternal, or territorial language ... rural in its origins; ... a vehicular, urban, governmental, even worldwide language ... ; referential language, language of sense and of culture ... ; mythic language ... caught up in a spiritual or religious reterritorialization ... vernacular language is *here*, vehicular language is *everywhere*; referential language is *over there*; mythic language is *beyond*. (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 23)

In the world of Frame's small towns, still too much caught in the colonial machine to have developed a vernacular *here*, the vehicular, referential style of post-colonial New Zealand English is made to take on a mythic function without changing its diction, as demonstrated in Dinny Wheatstone's account of the role of the imposter novelist in *The Carpathians*. After the establishing

moves of the first two novels, in what can be read as an emphasis on the vehicular/referential aspects of the English being used, many of the novels that follow incorporate movement, at first from New Zealand to England and back again — *The Edge of the Alphabet* (1962); *Scented Gardens for the Blind* (1963); *A State of Siege* (1966); *Yellow Flowers in the Antipodean Room* (1968); *Intensive Care* (1970) — and later from New Zealand to America and back again — *Daughter Buffalo* (1972); *Living in the Maniototo* (1979); *The Carpathians* (1988), while the language remains the same. (*Intensive Care* marks the transition in that Tom Livingstone, a major character in the novel, travels from New Zealand to England and back in the early sections of the book, while in the final section, an American military force arrives to occupy New Zealand.)

According to Deleuze and Guattari, 'The breakdown and fall of the empire ... accentuates everywhere movements of deterritorialization, and invites all sorts of complex reterritorializations — archaic, mythic, or symbolist' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 24) Frame does not move toward a 'hypercultural' use of English 'with all sorts of oneiric or symbolic or mythic flights' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 25). Since New Zealand English is already 'deterritorialized to several degrees' in that vehicular and referential modes of speech must serve every function, what Frame does, like Kafka, is 'take it further' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 25), 'tear[ing] out' of New Zealand English 'all the qualities of underdevelopment that it has tried to hide' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 26). This movement takes place over the course of the entire body of Frame's work, 'bring[ing] language slowly and progressively to the desert' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 26), until she finds herself living in the 'Maniototo':

unforgettable landscapes composed of severe lines and blocks and planes; their stark geometry uninterrupted ... an extensive surface from which most of the cover has been stripped ... the Maniototo plain ... mania, a plain: toto, bloody. (LM 7)

And from this landscape the idea of the manifold can come, an idea of writing as product and representation of a subjectivity that is an assemblage, making possible her next work, the autobiography. These three volumes have a transparency of narration which rests upon, and can be understood in connection with, the preceding and following novels' 'slow, sticky, coagulated' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 26) experimentations in procedures of desire, relations of self and world played out in language.

When a major language is made to 'take flight along creative lines of escape ... to oppose the oppressed quality of this language to its oppressive quality ... an animal enters into things; an assemblage comes into play' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 26–27). And since, 'head over heels and away', the human has become animal, 'no matter how slowly, no matter how cautiously ... by hálts, sudden stops' over the course of the novels, a reversible movement is set up — the animal is free to become human. Frame's autobiographical moment is one in which the animal, the assemblage, becomes human and uses human speech.

'The second characteristic of minor literatures is that everything in them is political' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 17). As in the instances of accent and vocabulary mentioned above, which draw attention to a distance from the standard, any reference to social or environmental features, however casual, has 'a whole other story ... vibrating within it' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 16) with respect, as Frame puts it in a discussion of her own discovery of New Zealand literature, to 'the past, and absences, and objects which only we could experience, and substances haunting in their unique influence on our lives ... [overwhelming] by the fact of their belonging' (AMT 68). It is this 'other story' that Frame elaborates in her quest as sensate becoming-animal or becoming-madwoman, as observer and as trickster-storyteller, both as challenge to the (Eurocentric) colonial 'man-standard' and as establishing fiction of a subjectivity that can replace the standard. In performing this elaboration in the form of a body of literature that goes out into the world, she

gives her work 'the third characteristic of minor literature [which] is that in it everything takes on a collective value':

what each author says individually already constitutes a common action, and what he or she says or does is necessarily political ... But above all else, because collective or national consciousness is 'often inactive in external life and always in the process of break-down,' literature finds itself positively charged with the role and function of collective, and even revolutionary, enunciation. It is literature that produces an active solidarity in spite of skepticism; and if the writer is in the margins or completely outside his or her fragile community, this situation allows the writer all the more the possibility to express another possible community and to forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility. (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 17)

Though from childhood Frame expresses an intention that 'writing [is] going to be [her] profession' (AMT 64), her professional career in the sense of 'first book' begins with publication of work that was written as part of a kind of therapy. As described by John Money, the psychologist with whom she was working, these stories were 'crumpled up and thrown [towards him] as the writer fled' (Alley, *Inward Sun*, 21) and afterwards 'rescued' by him and left with a publisher. From the start, this paradox, that writing for her own life and healing and sanity, at a point in her life when she is 'in the margins or completely outside ... her fragile community', she creates the conditions for work that meets, and is recognised as meeting, some deep collective need: it 'expresses another possible community and forges the means for another consciousness and another sensibility'. For writers of minor literature, the impossible solitude of work 'at the edge of the alphabet' becomes a possibility of collective enunciation, the achievement of 'a stationary flight, a flight of intensity' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 13) as Frame acknowledges in describing such artists as 'captives of the captive dead ... like those yellow birds which are kept apart from their kind ... because otherwise they would never learn the language of their captors' (EA 302). This captivity 'opens [the

writer] up to everything going on in history today' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 18), and in Frame's case, 'everything' has as its starting point the theft of a young girl's possibility of becoming, and everything has as its response the elaboration of a writing practice that creates lines of flight, of becoming.

Deleuze and Guattari describe Kafka's writing as instituting what they call 'collective assemblages of enunciation' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 13). That is, within a written work, each component has a 'machinic' function that aims to generate the 'means for another consciousness'. This idea offers a way to analyse parts played by differing aspects of the work — characters, images, narrative structures. A proper name within a narrative 'no longer designates a narrator or a character but an assemblage that becomes all the more machine-like, an agent that becomes all the more collective because an individual is locked into it in his or her solitude' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 18). From this solitude, Frame says, 'One day we who live at the edge of the alphabet will find our speech' (EA 302). But how, as a writer, does one arrive at understanding a 'politics' of writing that builds 'machines' for 'experimentation' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 7), when to approach the language-machine at all is to become part of it? 'The problem is not that of being free but of finding a way out, or even a way in, another side, a hallway, an adjacency' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 7). In the next chapter I will present a chronological reading of Frame's novels that traces, across the body of her work, her construction of an 'assemblage of enunciation' that gives her the possibility of finding adjacency.

### 3 Approaching the language-machine

In the previous chapter I considered Frame's work as enacting a becoming that doubles itself in opening to a reterritorialisation of available language and the production of a body of work available to be taken up by a reading collective. In this chapter I want to 'turn to' (to use a word favoured by all four writers in question — another instance of contemporaneity) a doubling that occurs in the process of Frame's writing. I argue that, by means of the figurative elaboration discussed in Chapter Two, she uses each book to theorise a stage of becoming, which is then used as the basis for a conceptual 'move', a line of flight into the next book. This movement is not programmatic, but rather arises out of an encounter with what has been produced — the writer is 'read' reflexively by her own work, and given the information she needs for further becoming. Praxis forms a theoretical base for yet another stage of praxis.

The story 'Snapdragons' in Frame's first published collection, *The Lagoon* (1951), contains this passage that figures the problem of finding adjacency and signals the importance of this problem for the work to come:

How fat the bees were. Some seemed to have got caught in the thin red throats of the snap-dragons, which now rocked up and down in the wind. Inside, the bees mumbled and knocked and Ruth, sitting on the verandah steps in the sun, watched them. How fat the bees were, and how thin the snap-dragons. If you squeezed the throats of the flowers their red jaws would pop open in a gasp and the bees come zooming blindly out, colliding with the sunlight, and then of course they would get their bearings and plan their course, and fly away. Perhaps. Ruth smiled to herself. If you were free did you always fly away?

But oh for a sweet red prison instead of this one, this where Ruth was. (Frame, *Lagoon*, 63)

Throughout Frame's work, bees are a recurring image both for a self in search of language adequate to its experience and for the negotiation of relations

between the self and what I have called the plane of subjectivity — negotiation across a continuum that includes imprisonment on, or identification with the plane, adjacency that evades total identification, and modification of the plane. This series of negotiations can also be understood via the idea of relations between 'bodies' in the Deleuzian sense, as discussed by Moira Gatens,<sup>1</sup> who posits a 'mapping of extensive relations' that may involve:

increase in the intensive capacity of a body ... sad or debilitating affects ... or the sort of relation that occurs when two bodies encounter one another such that the more powerful body captures the less powerful ... [or where] captured bodies ... over time, become stronger than their captors. (Gatens: Patton, 169–70)

In these terms, the question is how Frame-as-writing-body can encounter language-as-cultural-body in such a way that the two 'combine to form a more complex individual that would enhance the powers of each' (Gatens: Patton, 177).

At the time of *The Lagoon*'s publication, the 'thin' inadequacy of available language to contain and nourish Frame's 'fat' be(e)ing had already led to her literal incarceration. The novels are a sustained exploration of what kind of 'you' might be capable of squeezing open the 'red jaws' of orthodoxy, creating, by imagining, kinds of containment of lived experience by language that are not prison. The books examine the experience-determined/law-determined continuum of language and resulting subjectivities, articulating the conditions of a theft of becoming in New Zealand in the middle and late years of the twentieth century, and elaborating lines of flight that are taken in

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<sup>1</sup> 'The cartography suggested by Deleuze allows one to analyse the composition of any given individual in terms of its extensive parts including its typical speeds and movements and in terms of its intensive capacities including its typical affects and powers of action. An organ may be seen as a body ... that is, in turn part of an individual human body. Such modal existences may, in turn, constitute extensive parts of broader social and political assemblages that will have their own characteristic intensive capacities. Thus, Deleuze's cartography operates at a number of levels: it picks out, or individuates, bodies of all kinds, including corporate bodies: for example, institutions of politics, law, and so on' (Gatens: Patton, 168).



response. In a series of images Frame records a changing mythology of subjectivity as self learns to make its own houses, telling as well as being told.

This chapter will explore ways in which Frame uses the modes of thought described earlier as sensation, observation and fabulation to construct an 'assemblage' that makes speech possible. Deleuze and Guattari's trope of 'machinic' entities makes it possible to foreground the function of language as a producer of subjective effects, facilitating a discussion of these effects with regard to Frame's novels and the plane of subjectivity on which they exist. Frame's whole body of work can be read as moving by stages: first she constructs experiences inside the 'machine' of available language, then explores ways of achieving 'adjacency' while remaining connected to the machine. Having done this, she begins to build her own machine: thought as machine-making. Becoming takes place through the construction of the machine, and through the subjective changes that occur in the course of its construction as part of a dynamic that is described by Constantin Boundas:

Movement continues to be betrayed as long as the identity of the body moving through the continuum is not itself conceived according to the logic of continuous multiplicities. Real movement, real transformation and change seem to require that the distinction between movement (the process) and moving (the agent or patient) be abandoned. Movement affects both space and the bodies moving through it. To move is not to go through a trajectory which can be decomposed and recombined in quantitative terms; it is to become other than itself, in a sense that makes movement a qualitative change. (Boundas 84)

In order to achieve adjacency, it is necessary to become aware of how the machine of available language works and how imprisonment within it occurs. One way of achieving adjacency involves first considering the 'superficial unity of the machine, the way in which men themselves are pieces of the machine, the position of desire ... in relation to the machine' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 8). In the literature relating to Frame, there is much discussion of the epigraph of her first novel *Owls Do Cry* (1957), a quote from

Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: 'Where the bee sucks, there suck I/In a cowslip's bell I lie;/There I couch when owls do cry/On the bat's back I do fly/After summer, merrily' (ODC 7). Many readings foreground the dualistic content of the image, for example Judith Dell Panny's gloss on the "cowslip's bell" of childhood [vs] the predatory owls of the adult world' (Panny 16) or Lawrence Jones' 'outer realm of Time and Death ... and ... inner realm of "treasure"' (L. Jones 175). Gina Mercer offers a reading that understands the epigraph as belonging in a series of figurations of female spaces of 'protection and shelter from the owls' (Mercer, *Janet Frame*, 29), (in this case 'provided by the "cowslip's bell"') within which creative work is possible. For the purposes of this discussion, though, it is useful to apply the Deleuzian principle of asking not What does it mean? but How does it work? with regard to Frame's figuration of opposing worlds. From this starting point, the epigraph can be read as a statement of the intention in the book (and in the body of work as a whole) to assert the possibility of winning through to a subjective realm that is not entirely determined by the machine's crushing effects, and to model a procedure for doing so. Positing the existence of a way through to 'where the bee sucks', Frame sets up a challenge to available language that 'stretches under' this and all the novels to come. It is this understanding — that there is a way through, that there is a possibility of *becoming* — that motivates a writing practice apparently devoted (especially in the early novels) to constructing subjective experiences of suffering. Characteristics of a world outside the standard are detailed in the first few pages of *Owls Do Cry* in a description of the Withers children's discovery of 'treasure' in the rubbish dump's 'cast-offs':

Francie, Toby, Daphne, not always Chicks because she was too small and dawdled, found their treasure at the rubbish dump, amongst the paper and steel and iron and rust and old boots and everything that the people of the town had cast out as of no use and not worth anything anymore. The place was like a shell with gold tickle of toi-toi around its edges and grass and weeds growing in green fur over the mounds of rubbish; and from where the children sat, snuggled in the hollow of refuse, warmed sometimes by the trickling streams of fires that the

council men had lit in order to hasten the death of their material cast-offs, they could see the sky passing in blue or grey ripples, and hear in the wind, the heavy fir tree that leaned over the hollow, rocking, and talking to itself saying firr-firr-firr, its own name, loosening its needles of rust that slid into the yellow and green burning shell to prick tiny stitches across the living and lived-in wound where the children found, first and happiest, fairy tales. (ODC 11)

The world of the dump offers a parallel 'sensibility' to the world of the machine of available language. The epigraph's assertion of the possibility of a world 'where the bee sucks' is underlined and nuanced by the novel's opening lines: '*The day is early with birds beginning and the wren in a cloud piping like the child in the poem, drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe*' (ODC 9), which includes allusions first to Blake's 'Infant Sorrow' from *Songs of Experience* — 'Into the dangerous world I leapt;/Helpless, naked, piping loud:/like a fiend hid in a cloud' (Blake, *Complete Poems*, 129) — and then to the 'Introduction' of his *Songs of Innocence*: — 'Drop thy pipe thy happy pipe,/Sing the songs of happy chear' (Blake, *Complete Poems*, 104). The implication is that subjectivity of 'innocence' is to come, if it comes at all, *after* initiation into the 'dangerous world' of 'experience'. Becoming is a response to the felt constraints of the dangerous world, and construction of this realm of experiences inside the machine of available language occupies most of the novel. The literature on Frame acknowledges that the Withers children represent a range of subjective experiences, as in Patrick Evans' concentration on Frame's imagery of fire in which 'Francie is destroyed literally, but in different ways the remaining children are destroyed [figuratively]' (Evans, *Meanjin*, 377), and Gina Mercer's study of gendered imagery in *Owls Do Cry* which foregrounds imagery of 'the wound or crevice' (Mercer, *Janet Frame*, 38). What these writers acknowledge in common is summarised by Gina Mercer, who argues that the four children can be read as 'representing a spectrum of cultural possibilities' (Mercer, *Janet Frame*, 34). *Owls Do Cry* creates sensations of the machine's effects in a variety of subjective circumstances instanced by the children, detailing

experiences of thefts of becoming, with the machine itself represented by the children's parents and the community in which they live.

One of the children, Daphne, acts as an observer, and it is her adult voice, speaking from the asylum where she is incarcerated, that embodies both the theft and the possibility of becoming. Daphne provides images of crucial moments within each of a variety of responses to orthodoxy, ranging from resistance to collusion. The figure of the fabulator-storyteller as a figure of successful becoming is present only as the disembodied voice of Ariel in the novel's epigraph. *Owls Do Cry* tells the story of the children as they grow up in a small seaside town in the South Island of New Zealand. Part One, 'Talk of Treasure', follows their lives in Waimaru and its rubbish dump around which their games revolve, and ends with the death of Francie, the eldest child, on entering adolescence. Part Two, 'Twenty Years After', follows the adult lives of the remaining siblings, while the Epilogue 'Anyone We Know?' projects conclusions to these lives.

Along with its inhabitants, the town of Waimaru maps out, literally, Frame's understanding of how differing approaches to language are disposed in terms of the power that is accorded to them. To belong to the town, the adult world, means to enter fully into the ordered restriction of available language, itself a form of aphasia, 'a kind of gap' (ODC 100). The alternative to this aphasia is 'talk of treasure' — a use of language for other than utilitarian purposes, for its pleasure, for making stories. To use language this way, however, is to belong, by definition, to childhood, and to be termed disordered and useless, like the contents of the rubbish dump. The Withers children show various attempts to negotiate a transition from the world of the dump to adulthood. All are viewed through the 'glass of fire' (ODC 53) formed by Francie's failure to survive, so that her literal death is emblematic of the severity of losses experienced by the other three — Toby's half-life between the worlds because of his sickness; Chicks's capitulation to vapidty; Daphne's refusal of capitulation and subsequent lobotomy. In this sense, Francie's is the first of a series of deaths which open onto an exploration of lived possibilities. By presenting Daphne's observation of Francie's death as a 'becoming-fiery',

Frame posits the possibility of death as a 'block of becoming' like that described by Catherine Malabou in her discussion of *Moby Dick*, in which Ahab's observation of the death of the whale acts as a line of flight into becoming-whale:

Ahab finds in the whale a death which is not that of his genus, which does not lead him back, in other words, to the generic universality that he is supposed to have sprung from. (Malabou 125)

Daphne acts as observer throughout the book, imaging states of affairs in which the children find themselves through a series of chorus-like interventions, and she provides the line of flight into the next book and the next stage of exploration of the language-machine's operations. But her capacity to move from pure sensation to a mode of subjectivity that includes the possibility of observation is constructed as a consequence of the failed attempts of the other children, as encapsulated in the experience of Francie. Part One, 'Talk of Treasure', moves directly from an account of Francie's funeral to a description of Daphne's experience of electric shock treatment in a mental institution, and it is only 'from the dead room' (ODC 9) there that she is able to 'sing' her chorus of observation. Movement toward adjacency is experimental, and while, as a character, Daphne's fate is bleak, she represents the formation of a new part in the 'collective assemblage of enunciation'. In order to understand the role of observation in finding possibilities of becoming, it is necessary to read the other children as Daphne's construction of experimental directions she therefore does not have to follow. Her status as observer consists in or arises in response to these directions.

Francie — figure of ultimate theft of becoming in that she literally, physically fails to escape/survive — forms a counterpoint to the 'treasure' experience of the town dump, and the potential for adjacency it represents. Where the dump offers the possibility of an alternative world to the one constructed within available language, Francie represents both the potential for mortal suffering inside a life of orthodoxy, and the possibility of trying and failing to escape.

As the eldest of the Withers children, leaving school at twelve she enters 'the time of living' in the adult world:

the unseen always, when people are like the marbles in the fun alley at the show; and a gaudy circumstance will squeeze payment from their cringing and poverty-stricken fate, to give him the privilege of rolling them into the bright or dark box, till they drop into one of the little painted holes, their niche, it is called and there roll their lives round and round in a frustrating circle. (*ODC* 20)

Frame presents a situation in which the young girl must relinquish her childhood connection with information as treasure ('She knew that a drop of iodine on a slice of banana will blacken the fruit, and prove starch; that water is  $H_2O$ ; that a man called Shakespeare, in a wood near Athens, contrived a moonlit dream' (*ODC* 20)) and with the power of story to which she has access as a child when she is 'Joan of Arc in the play, wearing a helmet and breastplate of silver cardboard' (*ODC* 19). All images of adjacency, of becoming-other, such as Joan of Arc's creation of an alternative possibility for herself, must be relinquished except as admonitory figures of dream, madness, punishment. Now Francie is subject without protection to collective judgement:

Francie Withers is dirty. Francie Withers is poor ... But Francie Withers is Joan of Arc, and she sang at the garden party —

Where the bee sucks there suck I  
In a cowslip's bell I lie,  
There I couch when owls do cry,  
When owls do cry, when owls do cry.

But not any more there I couch when owls do cry. There are owls in the macrocarpa and cabbage trees and they cry quee-will, quee-will, and sometimes at night because of the trees you think it is raining for ever and there will be no more sun, only quee-will and dark. (*ODC* 21–22)

Sensations of the 'living and lived in' space of treasure are transformed — what was once pleasure and protection becomes 'queer-will and dark' from across the border in the world of use. Once 'poverty-stricken fate' has rolled Francie into her niche, not only the sensations of childhood, but also its organising structures, stories (always in any case made by others) turn against her. The world of work comes for her as the darkest of tales:

Francie, Mr Withers said, will go to work at the Woollen Mills ...

Francie and Daphne knew that over and over again ... hundreds of girls, some Francie's age, were bewitched into a dark room filled with wool, where they were forced to fight their way through mounds of thick dusty-smelling bundles, grey and brown, green and gold, and blue like the sky that was shut out. Some of the girls choked with the colours and died. (*ODC* 27–28)

Frame draws the reader into an experience in which all attempts at finding lines of flight turn back on themselves: trying to appropriate available language for her own use, Francie merely learns to use 'the same voice that women in films use when they dismiss their lovers for the last time' (*ODC* 33). She grows less and less able to 'fight her way through' by performing a defiance that only entangles her further. Finally, she seems to accede to the theft of her own possibilities of becoming, to the demand that experience of treasure shall be locked away: 'you have to grow up', Francie says:

It's today and tomorrow and the next day.

And it came with Francie — today and tomorrow and the next day.

She grew more and more silent about what really mattered. She curled inside herself ... And Daphne thought ... If only she had some sort of treasure with her, inside, to help her; if only grown ups could tell what is treasure and not treasure. (*ODC* 36)

Daphne observes what is happening and constructs possible responses, lines of flight. The 'saving' image Daphne arrives at is that of Francie as Joan of Arc in the school play — this, she thinks, could be 'the treasure inside' that

could 'help her'. But Daphne as observer in the realm of descriptive images is unable to exercise 'saving' agency: observation is not in itself a line of flight. Francie is condemned to live out the full trajectory implied by the figure of Joan. Drawn back to the dump with the other children, Francie's defiance can now only take the form of a fascination, figured as her attraction to the destruction of 'treasure' in rubbish fires, with the theft that is being perpetrated:

What did we come here for, anyway? I'm sure I'm not going to sit here all day in a dirty old rubbish dump.

— But, Francie, you used to come with us, before.

— Before, what?

— Before you left school and everything was different. Wouldn't you like to be at school again, and Joan of Arc.

She was a Saint.

Francie giggled.

— Saints are not in my line. And I'd much rather be grown up. Tell you what, though, let's go down over there where they're burning things, and watch. (*ODC 39–40*)

Daphne is compelled to observe and describe how, moving closer, Francie trips and falls 'headfirst down the slope, rolling, quickly, into the flames' (*ODC 40*), consumed by the last remnant of story to follow her into the adult world, her role as Joan the martyr-heretic. The luck, the 'happy' discovery of fairy tales has not been enough for Francie; unable to seize the power of the book for herself, she loses hope of coming through to 'where the bee sucks', articulating for herself the voices she hears. Without adequate language, she 'finds it best' to be silent, and is burned with the rest of the treasure. This theft of a young girl's possibility of becoming — a possibility stolen absolutely, along with her life — will be emblematic of all the thefts to come. Francie shows what may be experienced at the hands of the 'dangerous world', and the fates of the other three children are case studies, variations on a theme of how this may come about. The death of Francie's universe of treasure/possibility is the event from which Part Two, 'Twenty Years After'



takes its perspective, and the thefts and half-lives suffered by the remaining children are seen in its light.

Where Francie is 'burned' to death, as Daphne observes it, by her impotent desire to carry some of 'what really matters' with her into adulthood, Chicks, who abandons her childhood name and subjectivity to become Teresa, shows the consequences of a theft of becoming that is achieved with its subject's cooperation. Teresa leaps willingly into the hands of the dangerous world, trading the rubbish dump's treasures for conversational competence, upward movement in the social hierarchy of the world of use. This is not an articulation of treasure, but its replacement. She marries the son of the council worker who was tending the fires the day Francie was burned, and they move 'up north'. Later, moving back 'down south' to Waimaru to live in a house built on the filled and reclaimed land of the rubbish dump, Teresa — 'if people at home when I visit there prefer to call me Chicks, I shall refuse to answer' (ODC 97) — does not want to talk of treasure at all. Her mother becomes the location of disowned sensations in a treasure-world that is relegated to childhood:

*Oh my mother was as big as the arm of land will hold the sea and not spill ... I think of her ... standing and saying to us, — Kiddies, kiddies a little waxeye has come to us in the cold weather, and meaning, Kiddies, a waxeye had come to her to hide from the snow and find honey in her, for she knew her bigness and sweetness and could not move for spilling some ... and I used to climb on her knee and pull open her blouse, and take her tittie in my mouth, for there was no one who came after me, to say*  
*— It's mine. (ODC 118–19).*

These sensations, recollections of treasure, come to Teresa involuntarily and are disowned. Adults who have fully crossed over may not legitimately acknowledge the existence of this realm in their own lives, even in the past — as Teresa puts it: 'Oh I don't know, I am half Daphne in writing this, it is not my usual way; as if a spell had come over me' (ODC 119). It is a world that

must be buried. As Teresa says of her mother: 'I hate her and wish she would put an end to all suspense and die' (*ODC* 110). Only an unweaned infant can suck 'bigness and sweetness'. Her children become for her the only permissible location, in the present, of the sensations and concerns of the world of treasure:

Peter is full of the quaintest remarks. He said this morning — Mummy, what kind of a world is the world in the washing machine? And last night he asked about the moon. There's something in it, he said. Like hills, and something that moves. (*ODC* 103)

Daphne's observation of Teresa's choice to distance herself in this way constellates in the image of buried experience as 'a kind of gap' (*ODC* 100). Where Francie's air was burned away, Teresa's deliberate choice of erasure brings a vacuum of another kind, in the terrifying sense that she has 'no inner life' (*ODC* 104). Her fate is one of implosion, subsidence — as the Epilogue records it: 'society woman found shot in the head, and her husband arrested for murder' (*ODC* 171).

Toby, 'a sick boy' (*ODC* 12) has his experience of treasure compromised even before adulthood by epilepsy, which also makes him unable to meet the man-standard, and renders him ineligible for full incorporation in the world of use. His fits, 'a dark cloak ... thrown over his head by Jesus or God' (*ODC* 13), are constructed as a kind of involuntary becoming-other, an unwilling impulse which acts as its own theft, since such movements away from the standard are validated by their subjects or not at all. Toby's epileptic (un)becoming projects him out into fear rather than into release, leaving him in a realm cognate with Francie's place of 'no more sun' (*ODC* 22) and with Teresa's experience of the 'gap', aligning him with the young girl as subject of theft. Stuck between the worlds of imagination and available language, with sickness as a figuration of the experience of equal parts defiance and compliance resulting in an incapacity that acts as guilt and punishment in one, Daphne constructs Toby as enacting a kind of reverse alchemy in an attempt to find compromise. Like Francie, Toby wants to maintain a connection with

the world of treasure; like Teresa he wants acceptance in the world of use. However, unlike Francie, who is able to collect information about starch and H<sub>2</sub>O and Shakespeare as a kind of treasure, school is a struggle for Toby, so that he cannot appropriate the information offered there: 'Toby ... went to school and sat in the back row and put his head on one side, trying to know what was written on the blackboard and what the master, Andy Reid, was saying' (*ODC* 12). And already, in childhood, the dangerous world is reaching for Toby, disqualifying him from the kind of compliance achieved by Teresa, assessing and dismissing him with the other 'dirty children' (*ODC* 12) who belong in the world of the dump. As an adult, even more than as a child, he is 'there and not there, journeying half-way which is all torment' (*ODC* 83), with no way of protecting himself, no 'stick to hit with when the dark comes' (*ODC* 60).

Toby works on the edges of the use-world in places that have the characteristics of the dump: 'freezing works west coast mine or foundry' (*ODC* 54) — the place of death, the pit, the burning ground; but he converts its contents — 'rags bones bottles scrap iron old steel' (*ODC* 54) into 'hard cash' (*ODC* 54).

Toby Withers unrolled his bundle of ten shilling notes and put them down in a layered and crumpled confection of soft rust upon the table that was small and shaped like a cell of black honey. (*ODC* 54)

Treasure to treasure, rust to rust. Money becomes Toby's language of sensation, the honey of adequate speech: 'good money, overtime, bonus, boots provided' (*ODC* 54). But as an exile and a sojourner through sickness, he can never learn to speak it well enough. Daphne images his experience of the gap between desire for a way through and capacity to identify a way when it materialises, as a different kind of suffocation from either Francie or Teresa/Chicks. To want and not-want equally, as Toby does, is to be seized, to have the 'velvet [cloak] with its forest of a million folds' (*ODC* 14) come down. A newspaper heading in the Epilogue gives the use-world's final

judgement of Toby's worth: 'Epileptic convicted for being a vagabond and lacking visible means of support' (ODC 172).

In creating these figurations of thefts of becoming, whether from subjects constructed as unwilling like Francie, willing like Teresa or ambivalent like Toby, Frame is setting out certain conditions for failure to find adjacency with regard to available language, in the service of creating a writing practice that can achieve becoming. Francie is coerced into using 'the same voice' (ODC 33) as the standard, Teresa 'refuse[s] to answer' (ODC 97) any but the standard, while Toby moves between acceptance of the linguistic currency of 'hard cash' and wordless convulsions, and these three constructions of responses to a dualistic system impel the construction of a fourth. Daphne, unlike the other children, has a double role in the book's 'collective assemblage of enunciation'. The first is as a character who, like them, acts as a locus of a particular variety of subjective experience and sensation in response to available language, and who, like them, suffers the theft of possibility.

Daphne's second role is in the formation of a new 'part' for the machine of collective enunciation, by adding (to already constructed thought-as-sensation) the form of thought that consists in observation and imaging of what is observed. This is a further preliminary move in the creation of a writing practice of becoming; the setting up of a paradigmatic image-realm susceptible to the linkages of storytelling. As a character in the novel, Daphne suffers a version of the fate of the other three Withers children. Confined to an institution and ultimately lobotomised, she too experiences the collision of the worlds of treasure and use as productive of a kind of evacuation, in her case by and to 'the dead room' of the asylum. Daphne's variation on the theme of collision consists in the fact that, unlike Francie who tries to defy available language by appropriation, or Teresa/Chicks who welcomes orthodoxy, or Toby who experiences the non-standard as sickness and who fantasises childhood treasure in the world of use where none exists, Daphne insists on bringing treasure across the border into adulthood *as language* that defies available formulations.

In Part One it is the character of Daphne, more than the other children, who articulates her recognition of treasure:

Inside the motor tyre was a stack of ledgers ...

— These are treasures, she said. Better than silver paper, this lovely writing.

— They're not, said Toby. They're just sums, grown-up sums.

— But they're made like treasures. Why do they throw them away. And when you're grown up you work at treasure, so it must be ...

And then they talked about the fairy tales that nobody had wanted and had put into the ashes to be burned. (ODC 14–15)

In Part Two Daphne is shown to continue in her determination to acknowledge the realm of treasure and bring it into language, with a consequent denial of status by and in the adult world signalled by a narrative elision of space between childhood and the asylum. She moves from childhood itself to a stubborn celebration of childhood, singing her experience from the non-space of the dead room:

the real how and where and who and why are in the circle of toi-toi,  
with the beautiful ledger writing and the book thrown away that told of  
Tom Thumb sitting in the horse's ear; and the sun shining through the  
sacrificial fire, to make real diamonds and gold. And we sat, didn't we,  
Toby, Chicks and Francie, as the world sits in the morning, unafraid,  
touching how and why and where, the wonder currency that I take with  
me, slipped in the lining of my heart, to hide it because I know. (ODC  
134)

It is she, Daphne, who smells 'like a flower bush' (ODC 97) who has the greatest possibility of finding the honey of adequate speech, of carrying its source with her, 'slipped in the lining of [her] heart', delineating shapes of life-giving enclosure, the shell, the living and lived-in wound, 'their island with the fire at the centre and the sea with its green web of forgetting' (ODC

80), 'the believed crevice' (ODC 170). Punishment for insistence of this kind is constructed as a compounding, an assemblage of the fates of the other three children, through

*the nine o'clock terror called electric shock treatment ... on the sunniest of days, coloured like a single toi-toi with a sunflower in its heart of seedcake though the seeds were burned black ... the scream of a soul surprised in a funnel of dark. (ODC 47-48)*

Daphne is repeatedly burned, as Francie was, but an added element of nightmare comes from the way she is also caught in the 'sunny' banality of an 'adult' order like Teresa's, and so is even more vulnerable to being 'surprised' by darkness like Toby. This compounded sensation links and perhaps precipitates her into her observer status, with its attendant capacity to escape (for as long as the book survives) as it catalogues her fate and that of the other children who 'sank too deep or dried up and the blackfly took hold' (ODC 9). In being able to describe moments of the theft or devaluing of treasure, she reinstates treasure, for them and for herself:

And Toby carries it backward and forward across continents and seas and does not understand it though it glitters and strikes part of the fire in him; and Chicks is afraid, and covers it with a washing-machine and refrigerator, and a space-heater behind glass. (ODC 134)

*Owls Do Cry* — a machine of enunciation that maps out the plane of subjectivity and begins to populate it, literally feeling its way along characters' sensations of constraint and theft of becoming towards conditions for writing lines of flight. A collective that forms counterpoints, squares, oppositions, adding to two dimensional sensation a third dimension, observation. Available language, its sensations and its subjective effects documented from within by the figure of Daphne as proto-writer. Taking as a starting point the line begun by Daphne, four years later Istina Mavet of *Faces in the Water* (1961) continues the work of observation, but this time entirely in the context of the place of evacuation. The novel traces Istina's years of

incarceration as a committed patient in the institutions 'Cliffhaven' and 'Treecroft', offering the sensations of her own subjective experience of resistance to the theft of becoming and sadness at its loss, and her observations of the experiences of others, both individually and collectively.

What is being observed now is the corporeal working of the machine of available language, its belly figured by the asylum buildings, its actions performed on the bodies of patients locked up there. In this realm, the childhood world of treasure and the possibility of legitimate non-standard experience has disappeared over the horizon. Longing still exists, but its treasure-object is invisible, inaccessible except insofar as it is held in the memory of the previous novel, and in material fragments, a 'pink cretonne bag' containing 'a copy of Shakespeare' (FW 113); 'stalks of grass ... silver paper from somebody's chocolate, the ball of hair ... on the floor of the bathroom' (FW 245). At this moment in the formulation of a writing practice that can find adjacency, Frame, through the character of Istina Mavet, 'enters completely into' the asylum-machine, in order to make her analysis of its action:

Ward two ... at night when their sleeping quarters ... became like a hive with the bees wailing and screaming behind the rusted wire-netting windows; as if their day's honey had been lost or never gathered ... in the evening being rushed into the Brick Building and seeming to execute a wild dance before they entered, as if to signal the direction of the flowerless fields where for one more day in the numerous years of their search they had wasted their time and yearning. (FW 44)

As Daphne's experience in *Owls Do Cry* has shown, adults who retain an orientation towards the world of treasure (unlike children, who belong in this realm) are viewed by the 'people of the town' as choosing to be 'of no use' and are punished accordingly. Like those in *Owls Do Cry*, characters in *Faces in the Water* focus sensations, this time of subjective experiences of life in the asylum, which acts as a dumping ground for those who have refused the language of regulation, and 'lost or never gathered' a power of expression that

might have allowed them to find or shape their own dwelling. The asylum's Brick Building is the house provided for those unable either to co-operate like Teresa or to find unconsciousness or death like Toby and Francie. As a figure of standard language, the asylum is shown to operate by depriving its inmates of agency. The character of Istina is constructed as living in the passive voice with regard to the disposition of her body and her time: 'I was for shock treatment' (FW 15); "'You're going to another ward'" (FW 81); 'I found myself in Cliffhaven' (FW 131); 'I was given my clothes and told to get up' (FW 213).

In her other role as observer of the theft of becoming, however, Istina develops further the possibility of resistance represented by Daphne. The Brick Building acts as a laboratory or kitchen where she can refine her capacity for observation as a form of thought in the service of writing lines of flight. Judith Dell Panny's analysis of the asylum as a figure of 'the house of the soul ... represented at times by "a small locked room" [FW] (p 204) and at other times by a ward, or an entire mental hospital' (Panny 30-31) is useful here in that it provides a starting point for examining effect of Frame's construction of Istina Mavet as a woman who 'enters completely into' the machine of available language. In their work on minor literature, Deleuze and Guattari describe Kafka's 'Letter to the Father', with its accusations enumerating the elements of the father's universal guilt, as 'a blowup ... an exaggeration ... An Oedipalization of the universe' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 10). The 'Letter', they say, projects the image of the father onto 'the geographic, historical and political map of the world' in a move that, by its very exaggeration, reorders the terms of the conflict so that now

the question of the father isn't how to become free in relation to him, (an Oedipal question) but how to find a path there where he didn't find any ... Opening the impasse ... deterritorializing Oedipus into the world instead of reterritorializing everything in Oedipus and the family. (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 10)



The point becomes, not to enumerate the instances of the father's fault, but to transpose them onto a large enough scale that they become susceptible to analysis. And so Panny's reading of *Faces in the Water* as a novel in which Frame foregrounds the asylum as an image of the soul is helpful — but on the understanding that such a foregrounding is carried out, not in order to create an anatomising projection of madness, but as a 'deterritorialising' of the realm of soul as constructed by the man-standard 'into the world' in order to 'find a path there'.

Istina enters into her 'hospitalised or incarcerated' (Panny 30) soul, both sensing and observing the life there. Her inner speech, which forms the book's subjectivity, continues to shake up language as Daphne's songs 'from the dead room' do, but where Daphne's singing is concerned with articulating sensation as the only means of keeping treasure-experience alive inside her, Istina's thoughts are concerned to symbolise and link sensations. They move from descriptions of isolated states of affairs to the creation of a paradigmatic realm of images and the construction of a self-conscious awareness of her observer's role, in which she watches herself and others 'as from a seat in a concert hall' (FW 90). It is this awareness of distance that allows her to listen for 'a new shape of reason' (FW 107) within the asylum's 'violent orchestration of unreason ... like a new kind of music of curse or cry' (FW 90). It marks the inception of a conscious fabulating 'part' in the work's 'assemblage of enunciation':

I will write about the season of peril. I was put in hospital because a great gap opened in the ice floe between myself and the other people whom I watched, with their world, drifting away ... (FW 10)

Istina's watching place at 'the special table' (FW 90) is where Frame begins to document a negotiation of adjacency, and this line of flight is confirmed when Istina leaves the language-asylum without, as had been planned for her, being lobotomised. She has not discovered the 'day's honey', but neither has she disappeared forever into the belly of the Brick Building. By holding to the veracity of sensation, by forming images for sensations, and by creating new

subjective patterns — 'a new music' — from those images, she has evaded the unconsciousness that standard language seeks to enforce.

A year after the publication of *Faces in the Water*, Frame's next novel, *The Edge of the Alphabet* (1962), takes up as its opening premise and incorporates into writing practice the line of flight from observation to the possibility of fabulation created by Istina Mavet. Thora Pattern, whose voice forms the book's overarching subjectivity, establishes at the outset her marginalised observer position and its linguistic character:<sup>2</sup>

I ... live at the edge of the alphabet where words like plants either grow poisonous tall and hollow about the rusted knives and empty drums of meaning, or, like people exposed to a deathly weather, shed their fleshy confusion and show luminous, knitted with force and permanence. (EA 3)

This novel's move is to recognise language itself as the controlling force that drives institutional surrogates such as the asylum, and to begin to reclaim agency through recognition of the internalised power of the language machine. This understanding is also important to Deleuze and Guattari, who argue that 'philosophers and poets can write against power by carrying on a kind of guerilla warfare. Since people internalise the schemas of power, they can also lead a kind of guerilla warfare against themselves' (V. Conley 27). Following this recognition, Thora arrives at a position of adjacency that enables her to make and link observations of the operations of language as part of a writing practice. Her observer role shifts from Istina's creation of a 'document' (FW 254) that records the sensations of confinement and notices the possibility that new language, 'new music' might emerge there, to a 'journey of discovery through the lives of three people' (EA 4) in order to find out how and from where in the self's deployment of language 'new music' is to be produced.

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<sup>2</sup> André Pierre Colombat places the writer, as creator of an entity that 'asserts the will to power of its own multiplicity' (Colombat 583) among those who become Deleuzian 'sorcerers': 'Sorcerers have always had an anomalous position, at the edge of the fields or woods. They haunt the fringes. They are at the borderline of the village, or between villages' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, 246).

In *The Edge of the Alphabet*, Thora Pattern's writing subjectivity is established as a container for the subjective experiences of 'Toby, Zoe, Pat' (EA 4) who make a sea voyage on the *Matua* from New Zealand to England, and who re-examine varieties of relation to available language. That this is still a question of identifying conditions of a theft of becoming and elaborating a writing practice in response to the theft, is established by the reappearance of Toby Withers, a character from *Owls Do Cry*, accompanied by, and situated within, his familial language machine. In an important distinction from *Owls Do Cry*, however, characters in *The Edge of the Alphabet* are presented as patterns of response to available language that exist in the mind of the young girl Thora Pattern, subject of theft of becoming, who has turned to storytelling as a means of reclaiming agency. Thora Pattern's life 'at the edge of the alphabet' and her containment of a variety of subjective responses figures the point of connection between the 'here' and 'there' of language and imagination: 'here and there, there-here the *Matua*, there-here the room also at the edge of the alphabet also in South London' (EA 97). Thora's voice represents a decision to leave the observer's 'special' position. In a double movement she simultaneously encompasses subjective positions that represent the 'waste products' (EA 3) of the world of language and she constructs a meaning for them through the action of storytelling, encircling them within a writing practice, a writing subjectivity. Here is the beginning of agency, adjacency, the possibility of directing the course of a relationship between imagination and available language, since the shape of the space between is now a written, and writing, self. Storytelling with its fabulating action becomes both the field and the expression of this relation.

This change is reflected in the language and structure of the novel. While earlier work challenged the novelistic genre by its use of extended lyric passages, moments of 'treasure' given defiant form within narrative structure, this novel begins to challenge narrative structure itself in an estrangement that embodies a progressive becoming-other in writing. Here we have a specific instance of the hermeneutic of expression discussed in Chapter One, where the structure gives a way of moving 'beneath the surface' of the narrative to

'find the concrete realm of the affects that traverse this progression' (Macherey 143). The book contains multiple points of view and multiple storylines whose relation to one another becomes increasingly complex. At the start of the novel, first person passages in the voice of Thora Pattern directly address the reader, and these are discrete from, and interspersed between, third person narrative sequences concerning the characters Toby Withers, Zoe Bryce and Pat Keenan. Increasingly, though, boundaries blur between Thora and those through whose lives she is journeying.<sup>3</sup> It becomes clear that Thora's journey is not just a discovery of things *about* her 'three people'; it is a discovery of their lives as aspects of her own subjectivity: things she wants to know for and about herself are explored through their experiences: 'Living where I am, how can I cleave to anything? ... Toby will know' (EA 30), she says. As unmarked shifts between first, second and third person voices occur more and more often, it becomes increasingly difficult to know who is speaking. Authority is distributed across the text: omniscient narration now functions by drawing knowledge *from* its subjects, and subjectivity is shown to be a 'ruined I' (EA 96), polycentric. A consequence of Frame's exploration of a new music of language is that demands on her readers change too. What is necessary now is a response similar to one that would be needed for engagement with unfamiliar musical intervals, harmonies, rhythms: a response that involves immersion, many retracings.

Redistribution of subjectivity has implications for each of the centres across which it is dispersed. While the circumstances of characters' lives remain desperate, their responses are no longer figures of a variety of separate fates, but rather constitute a variety of impulses existing within a writing consciousness that encompasses all of them: Pat's slavish conformism; Toby's entrapment between worlds, unable to spell more than his name, but obsessed

<sup>3</sup> This move can also be understood as a tactical one in Certeau's terms. As Ann Pancake points out, 'Novels in general are associated with the construction of the middle class, largely because they tend to privilege individual change, a notion imperative to the bourgeoisie's faith in social mobility' (Pancake 294). Writers wishing to disrupt such constructions use tactics including 'heteroglossia, polyphony, multiple narrators ... to supplant individuality with community and to rewrite the individual quest as a collective one' (Pancake 292). These tactics 'do not simply replace the middle-class content ... but ... alter its form' (Pancake 295). Similarly, Richard Pearce describes Toni Morrison's use of 'a dialogic telling, retelling, and transforming of a character's story ... Only this interlayered medium can give voice to the "dangerous freedom," situate it in a history of physical dispossession and psychological displacement, and open the way for tactics of negotiation and possibility' (Pearce 316).

with writing the story of the Lost Tribe; Zoe's refusal to capitulate — a task she inherits through the line of girl-characters from Daphne and Istina —

Why move into the same climate of body and mind and have  
indistinguishable dog-daisies sprouting in agreement from one's life?  
(EA 92–93)

Dialogic consciousness is built into the structure of the novel. Zoe Bryce, a schoolteacher from the English Midlands who has 'given up teaching' (EA 88) and come to the Antipodes 'in search' (EA 93) of her own line of flight, articulates motivations for subjective shifts that occur in the novel. She describes repatternings that must occur as part of her search, recognising that in order to 'say something', it is necessary to engage, as the book does, with the forms (and formulaic nature) of available language:

And I have changed. I must touch the surface. I must encircle what is  
dead. I, Zoe Bryce ... must think in this way, shuttled over and under ...  
the rhythm of my demands alive in my mind beside the composite  
historical cries of my own country — victory, rag-and-bone pleadings,  
church music of ice cream, disaster, bring out your dead. (EA 95)

Thora Pattern, as the voice of dialogic subjectivity in the novel, comes to realise that 'encircling' the dead is not a process of manipulation, placing them 'like goldfish in the aquarium of [the] mind's room' (EA 143), but rather a procedure that creates con-fusion, joint identity:

I am confused here on the outskirts of communication. I have set out on  
my exploration — I, Thora Pattern, Zoe Bryce, Toby Withers, Pat  
Keenan and all the other people I have met or known. (EA 143–44)

Thora's speeches enact this confusion in the way they affect even the material disposition of characters' words in the text. As Patrick Evans points out, they disrupt 'the typographical conventions by which the novel is set out' (Evans, *Ring of Fire*, 85), in passages like the following:

Five yards (say) from your wall in an area three seconds by two seconds  
have you a small light burning, as I have?

Calling.

And dancing with rage and pain when there is no answer, when  
we find that our code of measurements is singular, is not printed in  
anyone else's heart and cannot ever be shared.

A member of the crew kissed me and changed my life. (EA 117)

Aspects of the 'I' do die, as Zoe does, having received and communicated the  
'treasure' of messages that cannot be articulated within available language —  
the kiss of a nameless sailor on the journey back to England, and her creation,  
when she gets there, of a silver forest from a cigarette wrapping.

Is this the only word I shall ever speak and do I now retreat into silence?

... Surely now it is time for my death! (EA 272–73)

Here is a parallel with the fragments of 'treasure' in the previous novel, *Faces in the Water* — the unread Shakespeare in the pink cretonne bag, the 'stalk of grass or the chocolate paper' (FW 247) — that form the only connection with a world of imagination outside the man-standard for inmates of the asylum such as Istina Mavet. But where, in the asylum, the fragments remain unconnected, meaningless because they are not contained within a fabulating subjectivity, the 'deaths' undergone by Zoe's experiences constitute a transformation of the whole, and insights are not lost but subsumed. Zoe 'mak[es] a shape' (EA 271) with the silver paper rather than simply collecting the piece of shining foil. Through Thora Pattern's writing consciousness, Zoe's 'only word' is spoken in the knowledge that it will be heard forever in the space of the book. And so the trickster-storyteller brings us back to Daphne's evaluation of the dump's treasures in *Owls Do Cry*: 'Better than silver paper, this lovely writing' (ODC 15). Toby's Lost Tribe is subsumed to become a figure of story itself — the tribe's implied but never-narrated wanderings, a 'journey through lives' as Thora's are. Each moment that adds

a 'part' to the machine of enunciation and so assembles a new subjective possibility is a kind of death. Thora wonders:

Is it true that self-discovery ends in death?

And is death the vacant lot out of town, full of rusty sharp-edged tins, auto tires, human debris which only death volunteers to store? Or is it the oasis in the desert, with men constantly in search of it to build their homes and lives around it, that it may satisfy their thirst? (EA 300)

Self-discovery is both death and the oasis, the new possibility. The dead are dead, their losses remain; Thora lives on at the 'edge of the alphabet where words crumble and all forms of communication between the living are useless' (EA 302). But the 'one day' she speaks of, 'when we who live at the edge of the alphabet will find our speech' (EA 302) occurs already, in the eternal present of the book, preserved 'as long as its materials last' (WIP 164).<sup>4</sup>

The following novel, *Scented Gardens for the Blind* (1963), makes even more explicit the fact that Frame is now interested in the encounter between available language and imagination — becoming as it takes place within one individual who engages in all three forms of thought — sensation, observation and fabulation or storytelling. Instead of a public or communal structure like the asylum, or a projected outer 'journey through lives', the process of 'encircling' and finding new speech is now represented as happening within the self of Vera Glace, imaged as body or house, as in the following passage, part of which I have quoted before in a discussion of Frame's figuration of speechlessness:

So I placed before me a diagram of the human head neck and chest with the tunnels of speech and breath ... I moved my finger, walked it along

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<sup>4</sup> In this sense, the Deleuzian utopian project resonates with Certeau's historiographic 'service to the living in bringing back, honouring and properly burying the forgotten dead, those whose lives of hardship or struggle have been made invisible by conventional historical narratives. Naming the absent dead clears a space for the living: "it receives the dead that a social change has produced, so that the space opened by this past can be marked, and so that it will still be possible to connect what appears with what disappears"' [Certeau, *History*, 101] (Reekie 54).

the corridor ... My life has boundaries; I have discovered the exact amount of earth which I need; death will return me at the exact moment to my own door; my share is small and deep ... My life is accomplished in this small town, almost in this one street in this house where I live as a hermit. (SGB 10–12)

The novel refines the position of adjacency reached by Thora Pattern in *The Edge of the Alphabet*, in that it makes explicit the fact that Vera's adjacency is attained by a recognition that available language exerts its control through its structuring of individual subjectivity. Challenges and subversions must take place in this realm, which is figured in *Scented Gardens for the Blind* as one where competing impulses — the resistance of the young girl, the rigidity of the man-standard — are observed within the container of writing subjectivity. In this sense *Scented Gardens* gathers sensations and observations that will go towards the formation of Frame's concept of writing subjectivity as hypotenuse, treated earlier in a discussion of Deleuze and Guattari's formulations of ideas relating to creative thought. The novel begins an exploration of what Karin Hansson calls Frame's 'psychogeometry', more fully articulated in the later novel *Living in the Maniototo* as a system of 'triangular relationships in which characters, ideas and settings are defined in terms of sine and cosine, "opposite and adjacent"' (Hansson 68), gathered together in the 'Hypotenuse longing' (LM 45) of writing consciousness.

*Scented Gardens for the Blind* is an examination of the conditions for carrying out the 'internal' subjective challenges that will lead to a recovery of becoming through finding adequate language. Vera Glace lives alone with her daughter Erlene, who has lost the power of speech. The narrative's major concern for most of the novel is with finding a way to let Erlene speak again. First Vera on her own tries to encourage Erlene, then enlists the help of the psychiatrist Dr Clapper, before calling on her husband, Edward Glace, Erlene's father, who has left New Zealand for Europe to carry out genealogical research. With the bleak humour often found in Frame's work, the three can be read as a punning literalisation of intrasubjective 'relations' in the writing consciousness she explores. Vera says:



as part of my solitary way of life I ... have a silent daughter and the memory of a husband who keeps people, like hens or pigs, in an enclosure of Time ... he feeds and fattens their histories. (SGB 156)

Writing consciousness must hold in tension, in one body/house, connection with both the silenced dead and with the standardising control of language. This consciousness must feel the world around it in ways that are not customary. Vera figures the experience of writing subjectivity (as a composite action of sensing, observing and fabulating) in terms of a choice, motivated by what can be described as 'the Hypotenuse longing', to remain connected with her daughter Erlene and with the condition of being silenced, while feeling her way towards becoming as another kind of speech, a 'new language'. The image she chooses for this experience is that of a displacement of the senses — blindness. It is as if finding a line of flight involves the necessity of moving away from the ordering constructions that are possible when vision is privileged over all else:

I deprived myself ... I ... was blind. I was threatened by the dreadful mass neighbourhood of objects which acquire a power of mobility as soon as one loses one's sight, as if it were only the fact of being seen which keeps them in their place (SGB 15)

I was surrounded by shadows and presences ... [a] terrible flowing and surrounding ... How I wished that the map of my room were in numbered segments which would stay pinned and numbered. (SGB 17)

*Scented Gardens for the Blind* recognises disorientation as one of the conditions of reaching the altered subjectivity of reclaimed becoming, and enacts this disorientation in the book's structure as well as in the trope of blindness, turning the narrative in on itself when it is revealed that Vera is an inmate of an asylum, has 'no family ... has never been married ... [and] has been without speech for thirty years' (SGB 247). Disorientation, sight turned inwards, refusal of 'a cancerous growth of vision, measuring everything by its

ability to show or be shown' (Certeau, *Practice*, xxi). In order to listen for the speech that is to come, to hear its patterns, it is necessary to displace 'our pattern-crazy sight' (SGB 15). This recognition adds another 'part' to the assemblage of enunciation. Where *The Edge of the Alphabet* reaches an understanding of writing subjectivity as being characterised by its position of marginality/adjacency with regard to available language, *Scented Gardens for the Blind* begins to elaborate the conditions of marginal existence.

Within the 'flowing and surrounding' of Vera's blindness, it becomes evident that the structuring forces of language move towards their own dissolution just as the dead move towards speech: when Edward learns that Erlene has become completely silent, his feeling for her changes from indifference to longing — 'We depend on Erlene, Edward thought. We depend so much upon her to speak for us' (SGB 202) — even though what he expects from her is 'new articulate speech' (SGB 202) that will make sense of a world he experiences as capable only of 'nonsense' and 'babble'. He welcomes the possibility that Erlene's silence results from

the deep burn of words which destroy all power to create, the time of first-degree language so articulate that the vision of it results in physical blindness, and those who have spoken one word of it are struck dumb and forbidden ever to speak again ... Who knows that Erlene has not strayed into the future ... where few human beings have survived the tyrannical practices of the ruling words (SGB 118)

Erlene, for her part, longs for the materialising power of language, its self-generating capacity to provide a form for experience:

words in a language, nouns, verbs, adverbs, sentences clipped like hedges and lawns into strange shapes that surprise you in the dark. Sentences with the growth cut back; or like wild bush where there's a struggle among the plants to get first to the sun. Words which climb other words and feed upon them or blossom on them, like clematis. Dim green sentences with yellow shadows. Sentences like greenhouses

where the words wither at the first entry of a wind from the snow, but the flowers inside, pampered, never exposed to the weather, are exotic wonderful colours. (SGB 180)

Vera, as a representative of writing consciousness, embodies a kind of wave-and-particle theory of language. Her subjectivity encompasses both Edward for whom words are pure energy, and Erlene for whom words are matter. The speech she hopes for will be an expression of both possibilities:

Erlene, and all others who are mute, must learn to speak, not mere animal cries, demands for food, warmth, love, nor human pleas for forgiveness salvation peace of mind, but the speech which arranges the dance and pattern of the most complicated ideas and feelings of man in relation to truth; truth; it, the center; the circus, the crack of the whip, the feeding time of the spirit; then the great striped tigers leaping unharmed through the fire. It is something to hope for. (SGB 153)

New speech is to be a creative organisation of experience. This understanding sets up a conversation with Deleuze's discussion in *The Fold* regarding the relation between 'variation and point of view' in Baroque subjectivity, where

perspectivism amounts to a relativism, but not the relativism we take for granted. It is not a variation of truth according to the subject, but the condition in which the truth of a variation appears to a subject ... perspectivism as a truth of relativity (and not a relativity of what is true) ... point of view is a power of arranging cases, a condition for the manifestation of reality. (Deleuze, *The Fold*, 20–21)

Deleuze's description of 'a truth of relativity' in the manifold world of the Baroque offers a way to approach Frame's ongoing preoccupation throughout the novels with point of view as organising principle, summarised by the epigraph to *The Carpathians* in which 'J.H.B.' articulates a sense that characters in 'his' novel 'equate ... *being* with point of view'. To write is to 'learn to speak' adequately from a moveable centre. With this in mind, it is

possible to understand that Vera does in fact speak some first words, with the break-up of the world in atomic war, of a language appropriate to post-nuclear humanity:

when Dr Clapper returned ... just one week after the atom bomb had been dropped ... and the world was still numb with fear, tasting people ash ... he saw ... Vera Glace sitting on a chair after thirty years, looking human, and speaking the language of humanity.

Dr Clapper frowned. It seemed unintelligible, but he moved nearer to catch the new language. He heard it clearly. "Ug-g-Ug. Ohhh Ohh g. Ugg."

Out of ancient rock and marshland; out of ice and stone (*SGB* 251-52)

Not the cries of an animal, these sounds are perhaps the only possible human response to such a war. They are a refusal of silence, and a reiteration of the principle of motivation — in this case horror, 'the human sound Ug and Oh (with fear)' (*EA* 91) — as a source of linguistic production. Both 'first degree language' in their destruction of formulaic response, and 'strange shapes of growth' that might come out of the 'ancient rock and marshland, ice and stone' of human desolation. The agency achieved in this novel of 'relations' is the realisation that within the practice of a writing subjectivity, the forces of dispossessed and silenced imagination on the one hand, and the ossified structures of available language on the other, can influence each other.

Two years later, *The Adaptable Man* (1965) marks a further refinement and experiment in the enclosed conditions of writing subjectivity, or what the novel describes as practices in 'the caldron world of the witch-novelist' (*AM* 3). The narrative, set in the English fen-country, describes a period in the life of various inhabitants of the town of Little Burgelstatham, centring its attention on the Maude family. Playing with the conventions of realism, it sets itself up as a piece of detective fiction, opening with the murder of a seasonal labourer arriving from Italy to work on a local farm for the summer. It plays, too, with the conventions of family romance, establishing in this way its connection with the previous novel, revisiting the family as site of the young

girl's dispossession. As mentioned in Chapter One's discussion of Frame's figuration of writing subjectivity, *The Adaptable Man* tells the story of the clergyman Aisley's Maude's visit to the country to stay with his brother Russell and sister-in-law Greta while he recovers from tuberculosis. It also relates the story of Russell and Greta's son Alwyn Maude's return home for the university holidays with his girlfriend, as well as exploring the family's relations with various members of the Little Burgelstatham community.

Having established in *Scented Gardens for the Blind* that a challenge to available language must be carried out within the self-as-asylum, the writer as central character retreats in *The Adaptable Man*. She appears, rather, alongside her constructions as a narrative voice offering introductory comments and interpolations. Which combination of ingredients, the voice wonders, what application of 'first degree language' to the 'ancient rock and marshland' of available language will 'bring forth a prophecy' (AM 3)? This movement is part of a pattern in which each novel adds to the assemblage of enunciation by elaborating some understanding gained previously: *Owls Do Cry* offers sensations of subjective confinement within available language experienced as imposed from outside; *Faces in the Water* focuses on the experience of subjective resistance to this confinement and identifies observation as one of its primary weapons; *The Edge of the Alphabet* explicitly introduces the observer-as-agent, able to follow observation with a move into language, articulating subjective states of affairs; *Scented Gardens for the Blind* strengthens and refines this agency in that it identifies individual subjectivity as the arena of linguistic confinement. The move made by *The Adaptable Man* further refines observation of conditions under which agency in language might be achieved within the 'basin' (AM 3) of individual subjectivity. Like a new round of a spiral begun in *Owls Do Cry*, this novel offers a variety of experiments in approach to available language, not this time as an external force, but an internal one.

The literature on Frame offers extensive discussion of the significance of names in her work as constructed both by etymology and punning, as for example in the work of Jeanne Delbaere, Patrick Evans, Karin Hansson, Gina

Mercer and Judith Dell Panny. With regard to names in *The Adaptable Man*, Panny especially provides an interesting connection between Maude, the family name of the central characters, and its evocation of 'the German *der Mord* meaning "murder" and the French *la mort* meaning "death"' (Panny 74). She points out, with reference to the dentist-patriarch of the family Russell Maude, that 'among New Zealand children of Janet Frame's generation [and much later — the usage was still current in the 1960s] the school dental clinic was popularly known as "the murder house"' (Panny 74). She does not, however, take her reading a step further to comment on the way in which the character of Russell Maude is identified with the instrument of his chosen archaism so that in our first glimpse of him at work, 'he pounds away on his National Health mortar' (AM 12). The family of Maude/mort/mortar, then, is another basin in which the death and reconstitution of language can take place. *The Adaptable Man* elaborates the idea of disorientated — mixed or ground up — subjectivity as altered identification and orientation in time and place. The elements of orientation are pounded into indeterminacy in order to bring about an altered connection with available language, following a procedure comparable to that observed by Istina Mavet in *Faces in the Water* in which language is reduced to sounds in order to make 'new music' possible. The novel offers a variety of subjective products of this process of trituration.

Movement producing new subjective responses to the strictures of available language has come about as a result of adding increasingly refined observing and fabulating 'parts' to the assemblage of enunciation that is Frame's writing practice — it could be described as a move from observed sensations to organised observations. This direction in practice is signalled in *The Adaptable Man* via the presence of the writer-character Unity Foreman. She is presented as a journalist who follows her editor's instructions — performing the subjective function of observer rather than fabulist of 'Country stuff, not too much sweetness, not too much tooth and claw; mix the dead toads discreetly with the crushed lilac' (AM 45). Her voice is similar in tone to that of the narrator, although Unity does not appear by name until Chapter Seven and very infrequently after that. She does not appear in the Prologue's

introductory list of characters. To underline the fact that her 'journalistic observations' are of internal rather than an external states (and to build in one of many jokes that foreground this novel's pseudo-conventionality), Unity Foreman is shown to be writing about 'The Charming Village of Little Burgelstatham' (AM 45) from 'a flat ... near a bus-stop ... [among] the Piccadilly crowds at rush-hour' (AM 46).

The objects of writing-observation in *The Adaptable Man* are varieties of internal response to the problem of confinement within available language, drawing on insights gained in the previous novel. Vera Glace in *Scented Gardens for the Blind* identifies disorientation as a necessary precondition for finding lines of flight, moving towards altered subjective possibilities. Vera chooses blindness as a figure for her perception that, in order to find adjacency, it is necessary to move away from an obsession with 'pattern-crazy sight' (SGB 15). Once 'blind' to standard subjectivity, she is free to experiment internally, and one of her experiments takes place through the character of her 'husband' Edward. His decision to 'turn to' (SGB 27) the past through identification with the Strang family marks the beginning of a long process in Frame's work as an author by which she enacts observation and incorporation of imaginative identification into her writing practice as a means of gaining subjective agency.

Earlier in this chapter I treated characters as experiments in differing sets of subjective relations with the present and with geographical location: Aisley Maude has 'returned to the Anglo-Saxon world of East Anglia, of Northumbria' (AM 77); his brother Russell yearns for 'the past' (AM 84) in a less specific way, while Russell's wife Greta is 'determinedly "modern"' (AM 85) as is their son, Alwyn. The farmer Vic Baldry has 'chosen' Australia. In *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, Frame recognises that writing subjectivity operates as a site of becoming by containing and manipulating, through a writing practice, both the subject of theft of becoming, and representatives of the mechanisms that enforce theft. *The Adaptable Man* articulates a recognition, begun through the character of Edward Glace in *Scented Gardens*

for the Blind, that taking up any position relative to available language, whether as victim or enforcer, involves an act of imaginative identification.

Just as *Owls Do Cry* offers sensations and begins to develop an observer-capacity through the character of Daphne, so in this round of thought and practice, *The Adaptable Man* offers observations of subjective processes by which agency is attempted, and begins to develop a fabulating capacity with regard to those observations. The narrator, commenting in Chapter Twelve on characters' various attempts at subjective adjustment, observes that all imaginative movement in time and place leads to an increase, rather than a decrease in complexity. Attempting to modify the constraints of available language, each character

has adapted the quiet rural scene to his own true time and nature ... whittled away the world, the people, the land, the time, and because simplicity itself must have an end, he has arrived at himself ... The self remains: a complex doodle or pattern... (AM 77–78)

An image of alternative subjectivity — becoming — as a dynamic state characterised by a particular mode of complexity begins to emerge. The observer-narrator of *The Adaptable Man* does not figure this subjectivity as the mere existence side by side of multiple temporalities and locations. Transformation occurs as a result of the conditions of their interaction, the shorting-out that occurs across folds determined by a deliberate use of imagination-as-memory, memory-as-imagination, held within the 'cauldron' of novelistic subjectivity. The novel's final pages observe this shorting out as the violent appearance of a kind of light: Frame's grim humour gives us the image of a falling chandelier (like something from a bad detective novel),<sup>5</sup> lit for the first time to celebrate the arrival of electricity in the village, that kills four of the main characters and leaves another unable to move or connect with

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<sup>5</sup> Jerry Aline Flieger argues in a passage that is funny in itself in this context, that, 'For Deleuze, the spark of wit resides not in rigidity but in movement, "differential partial solutions" that do not enforce conformity but more often subvert it: "The first way of overturning law is ironic ... the second is humour, which is an art of consequences and descents, of suspensions and falls" [Deleuze, *Repetition*, 5] ... freeing the "point" from linearity, "with the aim of making it snap, of sending a tremor through it"' [Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, 295] (Flieger 57–58).



the world except through reflections in a mirror. She figures a way of seeing that condenses choices — for archaism, modernity, the future, some other place — into the necessity of a mirror world of re-presentation. Becoming is a process of fabulation, in which self-transformation occurs through a process that intertwines sensation and observation and organises them as narrative:

Vic Baldry's view of the world was as perfect and smooth as any view would ever be, although there was a star-shaped crack ... everyone who walked in the road outside the White House (beyond the roses) had turns at occupying the break in the mirror: spattered, splintered, starred with opaque glass. (AM 276)

Having reached an understanding of this possibility of becoming-through-fabulation, *A State of Siege* (1966) moves to make explicit an understanding that such attempts at 'arriving at a self' in this way are by definition creative endeavours. Malfred Signal is introduced as a painter who wants to learn a practice of her art 'set against the measuring standards not of the eye but of the "room two inches behind the eyes"' (SS 8), and who hopes to achieve this by retiring to a 'longed-for separate life' (SS 4) on the island of Karemoana, a move which acts as a composite of temporal and geographical identifications made by characters in *The Adaptable Man*. The narrative voice offers a subjective container (the figure of the island replaces the cauldron/basin/mortar of *The Adaptable Man*), within which is observed a search for alternative subjectivity, or a challenge to available language — Malfred's quest for a 'New View' (SS 17). Malfred is observed on her island, a figure of writing subjectivity contained within the 'island' of the book. *A State of Siege* observes and describes what determines the turns and patternings of the 'complex doodle' figured in *The Adaptable Man* as resulting from taking up a challenge to 'choose otherwise'. It also marks the inception of an attempt to include the realm of volition in the choice, rather than presenting it as something merely fated by a quirk of character, sickness, or social marginality as in earlier novels. All share the potential for change, *A State of Siege* suggests:

since the mind was realised to be a Christmas stocking of that stretch material, Imagination, that found itself laden with gifts — the same gifts it had always known, but increased in size, accommodated by the stretch material that had one limitation only — it was bound to fit, to follow the size of what lay within it; if it were accepted for a lifetime as a finite material, then nothing could be done. There had to be, from within the parcel, the collection of parcels, a sudden pressure, by calculation or chance, that showed the marvels and potentialities of the enclosing material. (SS 59)

'Calculated pressure' is the province of art, taking the form, in this case, of Malfred's search for a new view. Turning away from all she has known, she engages in a movement that summons what it excludes. Determined not to be subject any longer to her family, to her life as a teacher, to the things she taught and believed, she is subject to 'besieging' (SS 146) and 'haunting' (SS 192) by these things. Turning away is also a turning towards that operates so powerfully it summons the experience of a living presence battering at the door of her house, standing in for 'Anyone from Anywhere' (SS 59) in Malfred's life. What the observer-storyteller describes in Malfred's 'state of siege' with regard to her past and her place is the literal in-volvement of memory and imagination. The presentation of Malfred's family as the primary 'besieging' force can be read, as in the case of the other novels, as figuring the site and conditions of the theft of the young girl's possibility of becoming, as well as representing a variety of 'related' subjective positions. Malfred's arrival at a new view under these circumstances is so complete that it is figured as a death that occurs when a stone thrown by 'Anyone' breaks through into her house. This death is one that contains hints of resurrection — Malfred's body is discovered 'three mornings later', with 'the stone held fast' (SS 199) in her hand.

The image that emerges in Malfred's first painting of her new view is experienced by her as an invasion comparable to, and paralleled by, that of the presence that begins to storm and pound at her walls the same evening. She feels compelled to deny what she sees in the painting: 'There are no people in

my painting ... no one could make out ... the arm of someone being drawn under by the waves' (SS 47). The human world returns to her, or rather, she is unable to leave it. As Marc Delrez points out, the painting's title, 'My Last Days in Matuatangi', 'goes some way towards suggesting that she never even left her home town' (Delrez, *Ring of Fire*, 132). The novel belongs in the tradition of Frame's earlier explorations of subjectivity as temporal and geographic location of the de/re/construction of a self in language.

In *A State of Siege*, writing subjectivity is present in the form of an omniscient narrator demonstrating her function as 'pure' storyteller — no longer a character in the book's world, she *is* that world — fabulating an attempted line of flight. While Malfred Signal is presented as a figure of creative endeavour, she is deliberately *not* presented as a writer. In this sense, *A State of Siege* is the first place in Frame's body of work where a 'collective assemblage of enunciation' begins to operate with regard to conceptualising, by figuring, how lines of flight can be created. Sensation and observation as practiced in the first four novels, and the beginning of fabulation signalled in *The Adaptable Man* by the partial withdrawal of the observer-figure are completed and brought into play in this sixth novel. We are offered sensations of confinement within a standard 'view' and observations of moments of subjective challenge to that view, organised in the context of a story of self-conscious search for changed subjective conditions. The narrative demonstrates the possibility of change and the extremity of estrangement the experience brings.

Having assembled a machine for the creation and enunciation of writing subjectivity from components of sensation, observation, fabulation, Frame observes the machine at work. *A State of Siege* describes entry into altered subjectivity in terms of a single transformative deathlike ending of a former 'familial' way of being, resulting from 'a sudden pressure', and it hints at a resurrection. Assuming that resurrection does occur, what is life like afterwards? How does one live with the ongoing effects of the folding, the stretching of subjectivity that Frame describes? How does one sustain a state of becoming in order to pass through the mirror and survive? *Yellow Flowers*

in the *Antipodean Room* (1968), published in New Zealand as *The Rainbirds*, begins another round of creative thought — this time regarding the subjective experience for artists of living their transformed subjectivities. Having isolated and introjected the system of available language as a force operating within individual subjectivity in order to gain agency there, Frame begins to build another machine that reestablishes connections between a writing subjectivity whose conditions and existence she has posited, and the world in which it exists — a world that continues to include the writer's own internalised 'standard' responses.

Experiences described in this novel are not the sensations resulting from an involuntary challenge to available language perceived as an external force, such as those made by Daphne Withers of *Owls Do Cry* or Istina Mavet of *Faces in the Water*, nor are they observations of ways through to agency as in the two novels that follow. Rather, having established available language as an internalised controlling force within individual subjectivity, and having begun to exercise agency via the creation of works such as *The Adaptable Man* and *A State of Siege* that function as externalised minds, 'cauldrons' of creative subjectivity, in *Yellow Flowers*, Frame writes another novel that can be read as figuring a container of this sort, a 'basin' to hold experiences that follow transformation. Like Malfred Signal of *A State of Siege*, Godfrey Rainbird, character in another 'family' story, 'not a convicted criminal, not suffering from physical or mental illness' (YF 3) changes geographical place as an act of will, switching hemispheres to make 'a new start in life' (YF 4). But rather than devoting itself to the conditions under which a 'new start' can be made as *A State of Siege* does, *Yellow Flowers* moves through Godfrey's arrival in New Zealand, his marriage and the birth of his children in the space of the first fifteen pages. On page seventeen he is described as being involved one night in an accident, 'struck down by a car' and believed by those around him to have been 'killed instantly'. He is taken to the hospital, pronounced dead, spends the next day and night in the mortuary, and on the third day regains consciousness. At the beginning of the novel, in other words, he arrives at the place where *A State of Siege* ended. In this case, however, family

is figured not only as the site of originary theft of becoming, but of its ongoing contestation within writing subjectivity and writing practice.

As Valerie Sutherland comments in an essay on *Scented Gardens for the Blind*, 'much of the writing of Janet Frame has been characterized as metafictional' (Sutherland, *Commonwealth Review*, 121). The work's status as metafiction was recognised very early, as for example by a number of the contributors to Jeanne Delbaere-Garant's 1978 collection of essays on Frame's work, *Bird, Hawk, Bogie*. Given such a recognition of this aspect of her work, it is surprising how much of the literature comments on Frame's awareness of the limitations of New Zealand society and the struggles experienced by a writer attempting to negotiate a place for herself there, and leaves it at that. It is a short flight (as the stone flies) from this position to one that acknowledges that Frame's attention to the social machinations in which her writers are embroiled has the effect of figuring internalised tension and ambivalence.

Reading *Yellow Flowers* in all its aspects as a representation of writing subjectivity, Godfrey Rainbird's experiences, even though he is not presented as an artist, can be understood as the sensations of one such as Malfred Signal of *A State of Siege* who breaks through, falls through into altered subjectivity. The book acts as a *gestalt* figuring both a writer's own internalised resistances and responses of welcome to breakthrough, and those of the world around them — both the longing for things to be 'the same as before' and the fascination with new possibilities. Malfred Signal describes the cycle of 'complaint' in *A State of Siege* — '*I want to know, I know, I want not to know*' (SS 39), and Godfrey experiences the same ambivalence:

He felt that his life, formerly a wide stream flowing placidly through a pleasantly dull landscape ... had become without warning a torrent that dropped suddenly into a small dark hole in the earth, with the only evidence of its continuing life seen in the unhealthy patches of red swamp that appeared, like a rash of skin disease, upon the earth above.

Yet in the right season was not such swampland covered with blue flag lilies that people stop to admire and pick and carry away? (YF 101)

Frame describes the shock and discomfort, the 'turmoil and inconvenience' (YF 72) of change — neither internalised nor external structures and systems disappear with the transformative event. An experience of death and resurrection does not bring stability but a need for repeated negotiation of internal dynamics and external relations — altered subjectivity is shown to be above all a process of change in itself, as implied by Deleuze and Guattari in their choice of the gerund, *becoming*, to describe their understanding. Each line of flight is a movement into territory that imposes its own necessity for escape. After his awakening, Godfrey finds himself involved in 'an arduous exercise in an extreme form of adaptability' (YF 56) as he struggles to accommodate what has happened to him. He cannot work in the same way he did before his 'death' and loses his job; neither can he connect with his family in the same way. He brings change to his world, a contagion of necessity, so that the death-transformation begins to extend beyond him to involve his wife as well. Change demands more change — the machine runs on.

*Intensive Care* (1970) continues to elaborate an understanding of the interaction between writing subjectivity — the impulse to move — and the world (internal and external) around it. In *The Adaptable Man* the 'witch-novelist' has identified lines of flight as imaginative 'shortings-out' as I have described them, across chosen imaginatively-constructed folds that bring desired subjective qualities of time and place into contact with the present, and in *A State of Siege* she has constructed the moment of shorting-out. In *Yellow Flowers* she projects experience beyond the transformative event to discover altered subjectivity as process rather than steady state, and one which generates further transformation as it alters subjective conditions around it. Growing in confidence, then, in *Intensive Care*, the novel that follows *Yellow Flowers*, she experiments with temporal shortings-out of a different kind from earlier ones, creating a direct challenge to standard subjectivity, standard language. Instead of using imaginative folds to remove herself directly from confinement by identification with an 'elsewhere', the character Naomi

Livingstone in *Intensive Care* precipitates change by bringing the folds of (already-transformed) writing subjectivity into contact with sites of theft of becoming — a sort of retro-active folding — and projecting these sites through the present and into the future.

*Intensive Care* is part cautionary tale, part manifesto. The first two sections, dealing with three generations in the life of the Livingstone family, create a *gestalt* that reaches into the past to offer a diachronic experience of the formation of writing subjectivity as a consequence of the constraints of available language: a family romance of creative thought. Tom Livingstone, victim of war and tyrant to his family, is the 'first dad' (IC 13) of the narrative voice. His daughter Naomi marks a return of the young girl as observer-narrator, watching the writing machine at work in the world in the new round of thought the novel represents. She is constructed as bedridden, mortally ill, lying where 'life is lived half in a dream, identifying pain and relief from pain, embroidering both in a tapestry of hope and despair on a frame of memory' (IC 54), and thus figures both the folding of subjective process and the ongoing pattern of death-in-life already identified in previous novels. Naomi is aware of herself as subject of theft, as being in search of reconstruction, and she is aware of her own resistance to 'restoration':

I had a dream that the doctor came to restore all those parts of my body that had been taken from me, that instead of the usual search and destroy operation of War he performed a healing restorative operation, recovery, but before he returned my body to me he arranged the parts for my inspection: raw, dead, ugly objects to be flushed away, I thought, with the lid shut.

"Here's your me," he said ...

"It's easier," he said, "if I treat you as a flower and name the returned parts of you as petal, stalk, and so on."

... I think I refused to accept my "me" because it was a stranger in its separate becoming; it was raw, dead, ugly — cat's meat. (IC 54)

This sequence can be read as a summation of the 'operation' of the language-machine — it performs both 'search and destroy' and 'healing restorative' functions, and it does so at the level of taxonomy — 'parts of [the] body' become their linguistic ascriptions 'raw, dead, ugly'; 'flower parts ... petal, stalk'. The young self of memory, of treasure-experience, must be recovered in order to change the destructive naming that turns the world into 'cat's meat'. In *Intensive Care*, this self is figured by Ciss Everest, first love of Tom Livingstone, who represents, for the tyrant and enforcer Tom has become, the only possibility of restorative change. As Naomi tells Tom, '[Ciss is] your only witness to yourself at eighteen, the only witness to you in love' (*IC* 55). In Naomi's 'cat's meat' dream, 'Ciss appeared and claimed what I had thrown away, seeing in it a becoming that was valuable to her' (*IC* 55). Only the witness to a self in love can approach the becoming-self as other than monstrous, 'a stranger'.

Having identified the young girl as existing at the furthest human distance from the man-standard, any further change is figured as a move into what is non-human. The experience of becoming as a move towards the animal is reiterated elsewhere in the novel. As the character Milly Galbraith, 'poor girl' of the book's final section demonstrates, becoming other, after passing through the young girl, moves towards what Deleuze and Guattari describe as 'becoming-animal': 'becoming-woman is the first quantum ... with the becomings-animal that link up with it coming next' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, 279). Colin Monk, responsible for enforcement of the Human Delineation Act, when he meets Milly, describes his 'wild notion that here was a creature emerged like rabbit or hedgehog or elf to exist ... with plant and animals' (*IC* 223). The whole of the final section is organised around Deciding Day, when the forces of the man-standard will classify as animal all those who fall outside the standard in any way.

*Intensive Care* is both a repetition of the warning given in *Yellow Flowers* regarding the cost of maintaining an orientation toward lines of flight and a description of the collective role, the mission even, of such an orientation. In this round of thought, the chorus-like voice of Naomi, while it echoes the



voice of Daphne in *Owls Do Cry*, is also different from Daphne's in that it has self-awareness. Naomi's personal 'tapestry' of memory and embroidery/imagination that identifies the causes of pain and the means of relief from pain is contextualised in the novel's final section in a way that further differentiates it from *Owls do Cry*. Here Frame creates a vision of the future bequeathed by the Livingstones — for whom Naomi identifies tyranny as the predominant pattern — to the place where they lived. As the novel's implied observer-narrator, Naomi withdraws again in this section to leave only the container of the narrative to speak for her, offering a post-apocalyptic landscape where family history has played and continues to play itself out in society at large. As the writer-character Milly Galbraith (a girl-woman who is about to have her life stolen by the regime her society has inherited) describes this playing-out in the 'special spelling' of her journal:

when I said I thought the house had fallen apart in a war and the Livingstone's had been razed in a war, my father said: no they did it themselves, it was their own country, their own family histree pulling its weight. (IC 265)

In such a context, not only individual actions have wide consequences, but the memory that contains them, as embodied by Frame's writing practice, has a role that extends beyond the personal too. The world of the Galbraiths, (inheritors and perpetuators of the convention-bound world of Lance Galbraith, Godfrey Rainbird's employer in *Yellow Flowers*), is in the process of organising itself for 'Classification Day' (IC 219) when the entire population of New Zealand is to be determined to be either human or animal according to a computer-generated formula. The novel describes this legislation as being supported by an enormously insistent Orwellian advertising campaign aimed at manipulating the people into cooperating with the directives of the 'Human Delineation Act': 'Happy and Free with H.D.' (IC 215). In the face of this deployment of language, the only response, *Intensive Care* suggests, is a differently organised use of words, such as Milly Galbraith's 'special spelling' that can 'make the words show up for what they really are' (IC 243). An important move made by Frame in this section is the

incorporation, as mentioned earlier, of the first-person voice of Colin Monk, representative of standard language. While the deathly outcome (via enforcement of the Human Delineation Act) for Milly and others like her is unchanged, Colin and his peers are shown to be subject to 'wild notions' in the face of non-standard subjectivity, and to be ambivalent about the consequences of their actions, so that they are almost 'overcome by the sweet smell of the ... fires of the dead' (IC 338). This opening into the man-standard, internalised within the book's subjective space, provides a line of flight into the next novel.

The folding action of memory/imagination, Frame suggests, is the source of becoming in language. This is made clear in a passage I have already referred to in Chapter One in a discussion of spatiality in the novels, but will now quote in full to show the contrasting figuration of two subjective styles:

Women have so many secret pockets and undiscovered ravines, the government never dreamed. If protests arise ... they will come from the women. The men wear their lives and thoughts like outhouses, big barns on their estates that can be burned down without trace of the harvest; but these pleated females with their folds and tucks and creases — some part of their lives will never be cleaned away; it is they who will keep the race-memory; flower seed in a crack of the world. (IC 217)

Articulating the theft of the young girl's becoming, *Intensive Care* observes personal necessities of experience that motivate the search for adequate language, and it observes personal responses of restoration through imagination and memory. These motivations/responses produce particular subjective constellations, particular imaginative foldings, and in the narrative of the final section, these personal subjectivities are presented as operating within a collective.

The next novel, *Daughter Buffalo* (1972), makes it plain that the gendered description of subjective styles offered in *Intensive Care* is not a simple-minded division into differing capacities belonging exclusively to women and

to men. In an elaboration of the understanding that the constraints of available language are internalised within individual consciousness, *Daughter Buffalo* offers itself as a subjective space within which both styles of deployment of language — tyrannical and freeing — operate *as writing practices* carried out by two (male) writer-characters.

Turnlung and his alter ego Talbot Edelman act as joint witch-novelists stirring the contents of memory and imagination within the larger 'cauldron' of the book so completely that time, place and characters are at once intensely realised and impossible to pin down. The novel acts as a demonstration *in language* of the subjective experience undergone by Malfred Signal in *A State of Siege*, bringing about her transformation-death. *Daughter Buffalo* initiates readers into a depiction of writing itself as a practice of transformative disorientation, and it does so by constructing for readers the sensation of that disorientation, constantly displacing 'point of view' so that no 'standard' position can crystallise.

In *Daughter Buffalo*, the figuration of transformation-as-death takes its most intense form. Turnlung explains: 'I'm a writer ... I want to investigate dying and death' (DB 20), while Talbot Edelman introduces himself as 'a student of death' (DB 5). What is being explored here, in Frame's sense of exploration as finding what pattern emerges, is two modes of language-use as productive of different kinds of death — that of Turnlung who understands death as a mode of becoming, of finding lines of flight, and that of Edelman who uses his 'studies' as a defence against change — with both of them subsumed by the transforming narrative. This is the triumph of writing subjectivity as inhabited by the trickster-novelist — that it can incorporate the subjective strategies of standard language.

Following the understanding arrived at in earlier novels that identification with any mode of consciousness is an imaginative one involving a form of becoming, both subjective styles are figured as varieties of relation with the other-as-animal — Edelman through his connection with the dog, Sally, on whom he performs practice operations, and 'who had survived almost every

medical and surgical treatment including the removal of one eye' (DB 13), and Turnlung through his sense of connection, which he characterises as parental, with a buffalo calf at the city zoo, calling her his 'daughter'. Talbot Edelman and Turnlung can be read as two instances of the internalised man-standard in search of transformation, one informing the other — Talbot as a youthful version of the resistance to death that is installed at the heart of available language, intent on avoidance, and which allows the death-sign to be 'abbreviated ... to D' (DB 13). Edelman's is a distancing move that retains the subject-object distinctions of available language.

The two writing practices carried out by Edelman and Turnlung offer the reader options — of reading in Edelman's standard mode or in the mode of Turnlung's line of flight. According to Edelman's mode, the narrative runs as follows: Edelman encounters Turnlung, and in his recognition of Turnlung's closeness to death, they become lovers. As Edelman puts it:

I had become obsessed with elderly men in each of whom ... I saw myself as an old man ... My first impulse was sexual. I wanted the old men to enter me with all their baggage of history ... I wanted the old men to give me, free, *their* deaths. (DB 20)

As this narrative continues, Turnlung subsequently experiences what Edelman interprets as the onset of senility, one of the symptoms of which is Turnlung's belief that he and Edelman have a 'daughter' — the buffalo calf they have seen together at the zoo. Edelman rejects Turnlung and continues with the death studies that allow him to observe, while remaining distant from, the experience of mortality, as figured by his 'treatment' of his dog.

According to the second mode of reading, that offered by Turnlung, *Daughter Buffalo* constructs a movement whereby the old man Turnlung travels from New Zealand to New York as part of his 'death education', and meets there the young doctor, Talbot Edelman, also a 'student of death' and 'a citizen of a country of death' (DB 21). In Turnlung's terms, becoming-animal results from relations between standard and non-standard subjectivities that are figured

using a vocabulary of sexual love and reproduction. After he and Edelman become lovers, Turnlung begins to speak of their love as having produced a child — their 'daughter buffalo'. Turnlung's 'return' to New Zealand at the end of the novel, a return which functions as a revelation that the entire narrative may have occurred as his fabulation, is another figuring of this understanding of becoming as 'productive'. Standard language can be produced and manipulated within a writing practice — even Edelman as representative of available language, is, as Turnlung admits to himself, the narrative's own creation:

I try to understand death itself, with inadequate language that is forced to make an excursion into metaphor and returns changed, emaciated, impoverished or enriched, often too powerful for its alphabet. I keep seeing Talbot Edelman's pale handsome face ... his gaunt body set almost in a pose of a letter of the alphabet, the abject M, the military R, the lonely nude I; as if he were an adjunct and instrument of language ... Is he a dream? (DB 102-03)

To turn oppression into flavour, to acquire a taste for one's adversaries, and to do it as a writer — Turnlung insists that for him, this is a process that takes place in language: 'He was making a few notes, writing a few of his death experiences, he said. In words. He emphasised "*words*". Not in music or paint. Words have much to account for, he said' (DB 89). The becoming-animal that issues from Turnlung's relation to Edelman is a becoming in language:

What about Daughter Buffalo? She will need proper training and education and a little language will do her no harm, a word here, a word there; a planet or star or two above the prairie; and I Turnlung, say that she shall not be tricked or threatened by words but she will race with the wind toward them, and trust them, and know the promises they give and those they withhold. (DB 147-48)

A decisive component is added to the assemblage of enunciation — *Daughter Buffalo* creates a writing subjectivity that contrasts with earlier novels, which

present experiences 'inside' the asylum-machine of available language, being written by it, or which present experiences of containing the language-machine while still being manipulated by it. By explicitly incorporating, through the character of Edelman, the writing-creation of standard language within writing subjectivity, Frame brings the asylum-machine inside the cauldron of the novel in a way that makes the standard subject to manipulation. Assembling components of sensation, observation and fabulation across the entire body of her work, Frame achieves a degree of agency that permits modification of internalised domination by the man-standard. By the end of the novel, Edelman, Turnlung's 'typical American' (DB 210), has become subject to a kind of becoming-animal, having 'leased part of [his] life and memory to [Turnlung and the dog Sally], where they remain, and where Daughter Buffalo grazes as if she grazed upon miles of prairie' (DB 202).

In *Daughter Buffalo* Frame identifies the possibility of presenting imagination and available language as writing practices that can productively interact within a narrative. Characters who represent each practice sense, observe, fabulate within contrasting subjectivities, and a becoming-other appears as a linguistic entity of the space between. This understanding is a condition of the move made seven years later in Frame's next novel, *Living in the Maniototo* (1979), which introduces the image of the hypotenuse, that which 'stretches under' the components of the machine of enunciation, and which is presented as being motivated by the necessity for subjective change. In this novel Frame arrives at a figuration of her concept of becoming as process and entity, and which understands writing-subjectivity as both the condition and the product of manipulating, by placing alongside one another, writing practices arising from imagination and from available language.

At this point in her acquisition of writing agency, Frame has the confidence to reverse the figuration of becoming-changed, presenting it as a move towards, rather than away from, humanity, having the narrator of *Living in the Maniototo* say: 'I am here to entertain you ... I use my talking stick and my pocket head ... I hope to progress from stick to pocket head to person, real

person' (LM 13). Having articulated the field and the motivation of becoming in this way, in *Living in the Maniototo* she also figures the procedure itself through the image of the manifold; with its brainlike, gutlike implications, its echoes and re-plications — each word, each point on its folded planes the beginning of some unknowable sequence, like the seed formula of a Mandelbrot Set, yielding infinite patterned differences of fractal geometry. Writing practices figured by this image create assemblages of enunciation that produce the possibility of challenge to the standard: 'those who use words' Frame's narrator says, 'scattering them like beans in a field [are] hoping for morning beanstalks as high as the sky with heavenly commotion there, upstairs where the giants live' (LM 92).

A line of flight from *Daughter Buffalo* to *Living in the Maniototo* is formed by the implication, in the former, of dual writing subjectivities. From the modest one-other, where Edelman is indicated as most likely contained by Turnlung, Frame moves in *Living in the Maniototo* to the acentric multiplicity touched on in Chapter One — 'Mavis Furness, Mavis Barwell, Mavis Halleton ... Alice Thumb, or Ariella, Lokinia, or Maui's sister, or mere Naomi, Susan, Ngaere, Belinda. Or Violet Pansy Proudlock' (LM 11–12). Social; mythological, familial and, finally, *chosen* names; voices and impulses, writing practices held in tension, connected by the hypotenuse whose purpose is to find a way to change. Narrative in *Living in the Maniototo* involves creating a history for Mavis the writer and her alter-egos ('I have buried two husbands' (LM 11)), and an itinerary — another journey from New Zealand to America for the purpose of writing. In the course of this narrative, not only *who* is writing is called into question, but also (even more than in *Daughter Buffalo*) *what* is being written — how fabulation works. Mavis is presented as travelling to Baltimore and then to California, meeting various characters; being witness or party to various events. While readers are told that Mavis is a writer, all markers are removed regarding the beginnings and endings of fictional processes, so that it remains unclear what, if any, distinctions there are between levels of narrative in the novel. This is presented as being unclear to Mavis also, who describes herself at the end of

the novel as being uncertain whether 'I myself was not just a character out of fiction, a replica of a replica dreaming of a replica of dreams' (LM 237).

Balancing Frame's figuration of becoming as a move towards the human in *Living in the Maniototo* is a reminder of the estrangement involved in becoming-changed, through the narrative's haunting by figures of animal-children, animals and non-human entities. When Mavis first arrives in Baltimore, she hears 'beyond the wailing of the wind a sound like the howling of a wolf ... No, it was a pack of wolves' (LM 29). While in the city, she meets Tommy, an artist-figure, a jeweller who makes 'world-shaped' (LM 33) objects. Tommy is obsessed by the idea that an obliterating force, a 'Blue Fury ... from a TV advertisement ... for bleach or some detergent' (LM 37) is coming for him, and in fact as Mavis describes a visit made to Tommy with a friend:

Our visit was short ... With a fearful look in his eyes [Tommy] turned toward some apparition beside him.

'Got you,' he cried, grasping the air.

There was a flash of light, a smell of laundry ... then a neutral nothing-smell ... and all that remained of Tommy were two faded footprints on the floor. (LM 38)

Here is a passage that can be read as both observation and (ironising) fabulation of a further stage of becoming: 'becoming-imperceptible' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, 279). To move far enough away from the standard is to become not merely non-human, but invisible, indiscernible — imperceptible. The work cannot be recognised, the artist cannot be recognised. Further, throughout *Living in the Maniototo* and in this passage in particular, the action of fabulation within the narrative is represented as imperceptible, as in the discussion that follows Tommy's disappearance: "Things like that don't happen," Brian said when we had arrived home. We were both shocked by the sudden plague of unreality' (LM 38).



From animal and otherworldly hauntings in the early stages of Mavis's stay in America, *Living in the Maniototo* moves on to include specific reminders of the young girl who provides the impetus for Frame's entire body of work. The narrative shifts from Baltimore to California, where Mavis represents herself as staying in the house of the Garretts, friends of a friend, who are going to Italy for some months. After a time (in which Mavis 'meets' and writes about a variety of characters) we are told that Mavis receives news that the Garretts have been killed in an earthquake and have left their estate to her. Another disappearance that folds the narrative back in the direction of overt fabulation, drawing attention to the fictional status of the whole work and to Mavis's status as a writer. This is the context in which she is 'told' that the Garretts had had a daughter, Adelaide, who suffered from lycanthropy. This connection with a wolf-girl reminds Mavis of an earlier association with twin wolf-children, whom, Mavis says, she 'can't ever forget' (LM 122). She goes on to say:

I began to feel that in my inheritance of the Garretts' worldly goods and knowing of the tragedy of their daughter, I was in some strange way easing the burden of the twins Tessa and Joan Martin, for they still lived, I had heard, in that hospital among the others whom the selective medical miracles had ignored ... Their influence from a distance of space and time was immense. (LM 123)

Writing, the process of 'inheriting' what is brought into existence in a work of fiction, is an enterprise that also has as its aim 'easing the burden' of those whose becoming has been stolen, whose 'influence is immense' in setting the machine of enunciation in motion. From *Living in the Maniototo* to the three volumes of autobiography that begin to appear four years later — *To the Island* (1983), *An Angel at My Table* (1984), *The Envoy from Mirror City* (1985) — a line of flight is created that takes as its starting point a personal instance of theft of becoming, turning it into the easing of a collective burden, using forms of sensation, observation and fabulation in the creation of a written life which has manifold subjectivity 'stretching under' all of it. This life brings into being, as it fabulates, a newly imagined version of a story

already formulated in terms of available language. This is the sense in which I read Frame's statement that 'with the autobiographies it was the desire really to make myself a first person' (Alley and Williams 40) — she makes a first person both of and for herself, using skills assembled over the course of a writing life.

Like the novels that come before them, the volumes of autobiography continue a move that brings into being a mutual interrogation of what is being written/who is writing. This 'first person' incorporates knowledge of the multiplicity of every voice, and of the way in which its own becoming arises out of productive tensions between varieties of selves, imaginative and conforming, that are incorporated within it. An 'I' such as this can give birth to 'daughters'. There are close ties between the familial, social and mythological categories in which the narrator of *Living in the Maniototo* places herself, and the motivations for writing enumerated in the first single-sentence chapter of *To the Is-Land*, entitled 'In the Second Place':

From the first place of liquid darkness, within the second place of air and light, I set down the following record with its mixture of fact and truths and memories of truths and its direction always toward the Third Place, where the starting point is myth. (TIL 9)

*To the Is-Land* begins with childhood and the years of adolescence up to the time of leaving home; *An Angel at My Table* follows with the years of incarceration and a beginning of recovery; *The Envoy from Mirror City* describes the writer's journey away from, and return to, New Zealand, a movement that figures Frame's entry into inheritance of her own 'worldly goods' through 'making herself a first person'. The books are a summation of Frame's minoring of fiction in late twentieth-century New Zealand. Deleuze and Guattari's image of the rhizome is useful here, figuring the possibility of 'acentred systems' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, 17): 'The work is a rhizome' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 3), even if (because of narrative flow for example — this, then this) the autobiography appears to have 'only one entrance ... this is a trap ... to trick the enemy ... the Signifier and those

attempts to interpret a work that is actually only open to experimentation' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 3). A trick at the level of approach, because the question is not, What does it mean? but, How does it work, and for whom? Situated as they are in the context of novels that simply refuse any one approach — novels whose doors are *trompe l'œil* effects or novels which open on scenes that are impossible if one enters by their given door — the autobiographies' sudden transparency of style is an invitation to use skills taught by the other novels and to ask, as Deleuze and Guattari do with respect to the work of Kafka: 'What crossroads and galleries ... link two points' in Frame's 'record'; 'what other points' in her writing do these three volumes connect to, 'what is the map of the rhizome ... and how is it modified if one enters by another point?' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 3). Following what looks like a straight line, one traces a figure that signifies a death-place of fixed meaning, points a line of flight, birth into becoming-other.

Beautiful disguise, the transparency of Frame's autobiographical language, for the breaking and remaking of speech. A beautiful way through and under the 'smoke screen of fear' (*SGB* 10). One of the trickster-storyteller's best ploys, this departure from doggedly 'mak[ing] the words show up for what they really are the cruel deceivers' (*IC* 243). This is new language that consists in the pattern of its folds — sensation, observation, fabulation concentrated not in making language stammer and cry out at the level of the sentence, but in its re-presentation of a world, determining how the folds touch — a way of having a say in the arrangement of things. Manifold self is a moving centre, gathered in points of sensation — it is 'conversation, the action of living or having one's being in or among' (*OED*), the word 'I' in the mouth of writer and reader, a narrow doorway out of the familiar, or at least an opening through which to taste the air. Sensations, observations gathered into fabulated image-concepts, a becoming that can reclaim the 'secondary identifications' of mirror-stage subjectivity, turning them into agents of psychic mobility, capable of challenging the scopically-determined world that dooms its inhabitants to narcissism, desiring/being desired by an other that remains always out of reach, through the glass. Full of intent, language arising out of manifold subjectivity binds desire and pleasure into its account of the

world through its musical and magical originary impulses. Frame combines this sound, that object, this event, that place for the pleasure or the power it gives: Poems and spells inhabit every sentence of the autobiographies, whose power is heightened by the seamlessness of their complications.

In creating such an experiment in writing practice, Frame brings into being a new figure for the organisation arrived at through manifold speech: that of the Envoy's travels in Mirror City:

[It seemed] as if within every event lay a reflection reached only through the imagination and its various servant languages, as if, like the shadows in Plato's cave, our lives and the world contain mirror cities revealed to us by our imagination, the Envoy. (EMC 19)

Here at last is a refiguring of the bee-and-snapdragon nexus of subjective entrapment observed in the passage quoted earlier from the story 'Snapdragons'. Rather than a question of 'fat' be(e)ing 'caught in the thin red throat' of available language, *The Envoy from Mirror City* shows a journey made by the 'watching self' (EMC 182) that is representative of a sovereign realm. This journey which effects the transformation of experience into fabulation is not without its dangers, since there is always a risk that, 'learning the unique functioning of Mirror City ... one may become homeless in the world, bankrupt and abandoned by the Envoy' (EMC 155) — but nevertheless the journey is made with familial, social, mythological 'servant languages' at the Envoy's disposal.

The Envoy is the figure sent out into the 'Mirror City' of experience by the self-in-search-of-becoming. The 'watching self' of writing subjectivity is capable of using its powers of creative thought — sensation, observation, fabulation — to assemble a machine of enunciation, shifting the balance of forces between available language and the 'young girl' who motivates the writing, installing at the heart of writing practice an alternative to the man-standard. Imagination is entrusted with the task of sensing and observing, and

of bringing back treasure for the fabulating pleasure of Frame the writer-survivor. The Envoy can be sent out to visit landscapes of dread; going out to conduct death studies, to become educated in that which the self most wishes to avoid learning or remembering. The unknown must always be dreadful, the sensing self aware of danger, scouting ahead bravely, gallantly, with curiosity and perhaps even delight, knowing nevertheless that becoming takes place on the edges of viability.

And so we arrive back at consciousness of those other crossings-over into Mirror City that failed or were refused, those stolen becomings, and recognise that Frame's trickster humour is not only a conjuring of a way through the 'smoke screen of fear', but a response of deep laughter that is perhaps only possible after facing the death-crossing. Hers is not innocent laughter — it does not refuse to look into darkness. She plays savagely with her readers, challenging them to make the crossing and giving them a taste of its disorientation, making her folds within the manifold, each enlarging whatever it encloses; writing her writers that write writers writing writers. She works out/in through layers of fabulation, each layer more and more clearly conveying itself as a 'servant language', as if the writer wore her world on the inside, as if the crossing into dread were a way of making herself at home in/out there, where a whole series of folds can be rearranged in a single motion, the elements the same and yet changed, the self 'excavated as reality, the ore of polished fiction' (*EMC* 19). Frame looks steadily at the risks of becoming and decides that to play in language, to make herself at home there is a possible response. In the face of the thefts all around/inside her she observes the vivisector's desire to reach in/out to cut away the source of fear; the brutalised girl's retreat in/out into silence, but when at last she is ready to have her 'say' (Alley and Williams 40), what she says is 'It was writing that at last came to my rescue' (*AMT* 106). The work of the trickster-storyteller is a response of deep laughter in the face of dread.

Once the fearful night-crossing has been made, not every journey into Mirror City is filled with the same dread. Change has been accomplished, the body has laid down a memory. The lessening of dread through play, through

laughter and a paradoxical becoming-at-home in a deterritorialised realm does not mean a lessening of complexity or of the need for alertness, because what is left is still the work of transformation, taking daily life across the border, assigning meaning by finding

language that satisfies the ear and the heart and the demands of truth. (It is the events of living that are not easily recognised as legends and part of myths that are the test of the value of lifelong tenancy in Mirror City; and it is the discovery of the new legends and myths that keeps building, renewing the city.) (EMC 183)

This landscape explores the writer as she explores it, discovering 'folds and tucks and creases', watching over her, as a character in *The Carpathians* (1988), the novel that follows the autobiographies says, 'always alive ... it knows about you, your life, your secrets ... it's there watching you, knowing you; you can hide nothing from it (TC 86). Mirror City embraces the folds of the manifold and the shape defined by the folds, vase and profile, experiences of sensation *and* observation and fabulation. Mirror City follows us like 'language ... the hawk suspended above eternity, feeding from it' (LM 43), shadowing, defining the contours of the plain of subjectivity:

Memory is not history. The passing of time does not flow like a ribbon held in the hand while the dancer remains momentarily still. Memory becomes scenes only until the past is not even yesterday, it is a series of retained moments released at random. (EMC 59)

Each journey to Mirror City, each re-membered moment is a point of becoming that mirrors the entirety of a way of being. As the hawk does, Frame's mirror-memory has the capacity to choose its food from the manifold, to fall towards that which the young-girl-self most hungers for, and the little daily self goes across the plain knowing it will be taken, caught up, that 'writing ... is not merely going on a shopping expedition across the border

into an unreal land' (*EMC* 155).<sup>6</sup> It is a self that is shopped-for, in its bewilderment. The movement Frame requires of the writing self is one that inscribes the moment of a page and a life with its proper discourse, as if the writing becomes a kind of memory, a 'retained moment' released by the future, 'the Third Place, where the starting point is myth'. The writing self is thus also an Envoy from the future, just now bringing back information about what it might mean to be 'having all in mind — the original, the other and the manifold' (*LM* 240). The Frame's Envoy is self-as-voice, able to go out into the silenced body, free and agile, like any stranger perhaps 'an angel in disguise or even Christ himself' (*TIL* 34) come for the harrowing of hell, raising the dead from 'the only graveyard in Mirror City ... the graveyard of memories that are resurrected, reclothed with reflection and change' (*EMC* 167). The whole landscape its instrument, making music, singing, conversing in echoes, the Envoy is made of all that comes back to it, a shape composed of resonances, a surface of sound like the surface of furnace glass, iridescent.

Memory, language, poetry. In Frame's autobiography things repeat themselves silently and aloud and are worn into new shapes: 'I may have polished the shell of memory with this application of time but only because it is constantly with me' (*TIL* 17). Words, meanings change, 'scattered or dispersed along the whole chain of signifiers ... a kind of constant flickering of presence and absence together' (Eagleton 128) always moving through and around what is 'most satisfying to the ear and the heart'. Voice rises out of the body's moments, and for Frame the motivation of these moments is the experience of treasure and the grief of its theft. Voice out of the 'dead room', shaping a song from what it is given, factitious sounds, words, phrases of stories spoken towards it, the Envoy follows a trail, footsteps into a world, tracing extractions, even scars *not* left in the face of youth. Healer and 'cruel deceiver', language both recovers and belies the deaths it relates, a sort of

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<sup>6</sup> Deleuze, too, in his work on Bergson, theorises memory as a force deployed in the service of de/re/subjectivisation: Rosi Braidotti argues that 'Deleuze's "minoritarian" definition of memory as a nomadic or deterritorialising force runs against the established definitions of memory as a centralised data bank of frozen information. As a vector of deterritorialisation, memory for Deleuze destabilises identity by stringing together virtual possibilities. Remembering in this mode requires careful lay-outs of empowering conditions which allow for the actualisation to take place. Like a choreography of flows or intensities that require adequate framing in order to compose into a form, memories require empathy and cohesion between the constitutive elements. It is like a constant reshuffling that years for the moment of sustainable balance or expression, before they dissolve again and move on' (Braidotti 162).

golem increasingly approximating some real, whole inside a living skin: 'Picture, then, a woman of thirty-two, fresh-complexioned, blue-eyed' (*EMC* 77). And then the next line of flight, crossing into bewilderment.

*Living in the Maniototo* marks the appearance of the manifold as figure-concept for writing subjectivity from which the volumes of autobiography can be produced. Mirror City and its Envoy conceptualise and demonstrate patterns of movement and transformation-becoming within the manifold. Frame's next novel, *The Carpathians* (1988) appearing three years after the third volume of autobiography, moves back for another round of thought-creation — sensation, observation, fabulation — regarding the moment of becoming, like an octave of *A State of Siege*. Frame has said of *The Carpathians*, 'I wanted those reading it, I felt those reading it, to be ... within a whirlpool ... It was a death but only in the sense that death is a horizon' (Alley and Williams 48).

Here is another asymptotic approach to the horizon's curve, trying for the last moment where some communication can escape from the black hole of collapsed language. The novel acts as summary and reinforcement of all previous explorations of the nexus of memory, language, imagination and point of view in the formation of subjectivity. Formed from a series of interlocking and undeterminable narratives, *The Carpathians* is

- the story of Mattina Brecon's journey from New York to Puamahara in New Zealand and back, researching the legend of the Memory Flower
- a story created by her orphaned son, John Henry Brecon
- a work of fiction by the novelist Dinny Wheatstone.

These are quintessential Frame tales in that it is impossible to determine which encloses and which is enclosed. In her essay 'The Narrative Frame: "Unleashing (Im)possibilities"' Susan Ash analyses this aspect of *The Carpathians*, using Derrida's ideas about the 'parergon' or frame in *The Truth of Painting*, describing Derrida's purpose as being 'to disturb the binary



opposition between "the intrinsic and the extrinsic;" to demonstrate how a parergon, or frame, can dismantle the most reassuring conceptual oppositions' (Ash, *ANZSC*, 3). Ash argues that the novel is organised so as to enact 'a narratorial game of da/fort; of pretending to give away point of view which characters in turn fight over' (Ash, *ANZSC*, 9). The novelist-character, Dinny Wheatstone, describes fabulation as 'seiz[ing] control of all points of view' (*TC* 52), and this understanding, combined with the novel's enactment of authorial indeterminacy, extends the 'flickering of presence and absence together' that operates at the level of individual signs to the book's narrative and subjective structuring. Frame as trickster novelist both affirms and calls into question even her own 'ownership' of the novel's various narrative strands with the novelist character Dinny Wheatstone's description of 'imposture' as the source of her writing:

The imposture begins with the first germ of disbelief in being, in self, and this allied to the conviction of the 'unalterable certainty of truth' produces the truth of disbelief, of deception of being, of self, of times, places, peoples, of all time and space ... My qualification for writing ... is chiefly my imposture which as a result of my nonentity, is accompanied by an uncanny perception of human life, love, death and the process of time. I do not claim it is an accurate perception but it is wholly presented as a vision. (*TC* 51)

The effect is foregrounded in one of the book's epigraphs, a note from 'J.H.B.' Claiming authorship of the novel, he says, 'I became absorbed not in my power of choice but in the urgency with which each character equated survival with maintaining point of view; indeed with being as a point of view' (*TC* 7). *The Carpathians* is structured so as to highlight what the 'imposter novelist' Dinny Wheatstone describes as the need to 'fight for your point of view, almost as if you were dead' (*TC* 44), and the impossibility of winning.

The experience of reading the novel is one of uncertainty about sequences of enclosure. Does

Frame enclose John Henry Brecon

who encloses Dinny Wheatstone

whose enclosed space is Mattin Brecon

who, like a Klein jar, herself encloses John Henry and Dinny

and the world (New York, Puamahara) and Frame herself

or

Frame encloses John Henry

who encloses Dinny

who encloses Mattina

who encloses Puamahara ...

or

Frame encloses ... the manifold whose centre and matrix is always presence and absence together. As Susan Ash describes it, *The Carpathians* acts as 'a sort of Gravity Star itself ... collapsing binary opposition as a mode of conceiving of the world' (Ash, *ANZSC*, 10).

This effect continues Frame's construction of the sensation of manifold subjectivity, of life at the point of becoming. The slipperiness of language as producer and guarantor of meaning becomes deliquescence, and the novel again approaches the collapse of available language. This time, as well as offering a figuration of the experience of this collapse — all the world's alphabets precipitate as a rain of seeds and jewels and pellets of earth and dung (*TC* 127) — and of responses to the experience — the population of Kowhai Street howl like animals — Frame also figures what lies over the brink of the unsayable. Each putative 'author' in the text marks an edge, and

the series of namings, authorships, manifold complications through which their narrative paths can be traced act as lines of flight into her or his own unsayable. What is over the edge is stories. Of those who witness the midnight rain, all but the writers Mattina and Dinny are robbed of the power of speech. And these two whose daily life and work are driven by the terror of loss of becoming and who spend their time in training for lines of flight are able, as Istina Mavet of *Faces in the Water* was able, to hear a beginning of something new in the 'isolated syllables, vowels, consonants' of their neighbours' howling, 'a hint, an inkling of order, a small strain recognisable as music, not a replacement of what had been lost but new music' (TC 126).

The image Frame offers for the force that brings about the midnight rain is that of the Gravity Star, an object massive enough to organise the disposition of time and space around it, and as part of that influence, to organise perceptions by 'focussing the light' (TC 7) in a way that changes what is observed. Under its influence something 'seven billion light years away can appear 'relatively close' (TC 7). We are in the presence once again of the wolf-girl whose 'influence from a distance of time and space [is] immense' (LM 123) and who is capable of 'removing, overturning' 'both memory and point of view' (TC 7) in the fight to recover her 'inheritance'. *The Carpathians* can be read as a summarising figuration of the components and motivations for creating an 'assemblage of enunciation' which operates by means of a mutual interchange between the creation of a writing subjectivity and the re-membering of life.

The book's layout acts as part of this figuration: The dedication and acknowledgements are placed alongside the 'note' from 'J.H.B.' (in some editions they are on facing pages) which describes the action of the Gravity Star — already Frame is placing herself within its force-field, making herself subject to its 'immense influence'. Not merely announcing that she is already implicated in narrative indeterminacy, she is placing herself on the border of fabulation, the place of dissolution of available language and the overturning of memory and point of view. She is also placing J.H.B., figure of the Envoy

in this novel, between the acknowledgements' 'cities of Takapuna and Auckland' (TC 5) (or what she describes elsewhere as 'the world of fact'), and the 'Maharawhenua or Memory Land' (TC 11) of the first chapter. Putting us there with John Henry on the promontory between these two realms, she invites us to 'stare more closely' at the cities of Takapuna and Auckland and remember 'why, it is Mirror City ... before my own eyes' (EMC 191). Here is a model of fabulation, a 'second novel' (TC 7) as J.H.B. describes it, written under the 'immense influence' of the loss of inheritance, committed to creating a past that can make liveable the future that is now, through the action of story. It is a fall into the whirlpool and an experience of an inkling of order there that is not a 'replacement' but a new ordering of available contents.

Frame has said that, even while writing the autobiography, she was 'anxious to finish it so [she] could get on with the novel' (Alley and Williams 46) that was to become *The Carpathians*. Each addition to the assemblage opens onto the possibility of a new component — the sensations and observations of autobiography opening into a line of flight that makes possible a new fabulation. In the case of *The Carpathians*, this new organisation relates to a figuration of the collective role and effects of fabulation. From the moment in Chapter One which articulates the legend of the Memory Flower and describes how the young woman who has been 'chosen by the gods as collector of the memory of her land ... has no human function but that of a storyteller' (TC 11) to Mattina Brecon's witnessing of the whole township of Puamahara's response to the midnight rain, this novel acts as a statement of the collective function of story. A writer who 'fights for her own point of view' creates lines of flight not just for herself. It is this consciousness of a collective aspect of writing, both for writers and for readers, that will be the concern of the next chapter.

#### 4 Writing Community

Literature is the theoretic discourse of the historical process. (Certeau, *Practice*, 18)

If the mystics were locked within the confines of a 'nothing' that could also be an 'origin,' it is because they were trapped there by a *radical* situation to which they responded with utmost seriousness. In their texts, this can be seen not only in the connection their innovative truth always has to pain, but, more explicitly, in the social figures that dominate their discourse — the madman, the child, the illiterate. (Certeau, *Heterologies*, 85–86)

Double becoming in the facing of writing toward a collective and in the uptake of writing by that collective is the concern of this chapter. This movement can be understood as another manifestation of the internal praxis-theorisation-praxis dynamic considered in Chapter Three, in which the writer, as a particular category of reader, is 'analysed' or 'read' by (her own) texts. I argue that Frame articulates an understanding of this dynamic through passages in which her writer-characters define themselves as motivated to write — that is, to offer instances of theorisation-as-praxis — by a sense of responsibility before the 'dead' (including their own avatars) who have been unable to speak. Writing as a process of individual becoming is presented as driven by a consciousness that the self is embedded in collective necessity. In the second part of the chapter I offer instances of responses of 'analysands' of Frame's becoming-in-writing from the reading/writing collective, attesting to its power to bring about subjective change.

In a discussion of the role of community in Frame's writing, and of her writing in community, the quotation given above from Michel de Certeau's essay 'Mystic Speech' serves as a useful introduction because it reminds us, once again, of the subjective isolation which acts as both origin and material for Frame's work. The 'lonely nude I' (DB 174) of *Daughter Buffalo* is the 'I'

of all the novels, a 'nothing that can also be an origin', arising from a 'radical situation' in which Frame finds herself, not in Europe in the sixteenth or seventeenth century of which Certeau speaks in his essay, but in New Zealand in the late twentieth century. Frame's construction of new language has much in common, however, with mystic speech of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as described by Certeau, where:

[a] field of knowledge takes leave of its textual 'authorities' to turn to the exegesis of 'wild' voices ... In these writings, a tradition, humiliated after having functioned as the court of reason, awaits and receives from its other the certitudes that escape it. (Certeau, *Heterologies*, 87)

Frame, in her search for a writing practice that can give voice to marginalised subjectivity, turns away from the textual authorities of Europe and towards writing from her 'own way and place' (AMT 68) and further, towards the 'exegesis of 'wild' voices' from the world of subjective experience that exists literally beyond authorities' horizons and is called mad in consequence.

Mystic speech is produced 'in proximity to a loss' (Certeau, *Heterologies*, 80) — of status, usefulness, agency, freedom, as a result of social change (in Frame's case in a (post)colonial context) — by those for whom

the memory of past abundance survived in their conditions of impoverishment, but since the doors of social responsibility were closed, ambitions were redirected toward the open spaces of utopia, dream, and writing. (Certeau, *Heterologies*, 84)

Like Frame's 'new music of curse or cry' (FW 90), mystic speech gives voice to the experience of relegation to a world of 'no use'. 'New music' is 'not a replacement of what [has] been lost' (LM 126), and it is not a withdrawal from language, since this is the means of articulating experience, even of pain. Experience is always seeking expression, and failure to articulate is seen as a desert of 'wasted time and yearning' (FW 44) just as limiting as capitulation to the language of the world of use. But this very desert, intolerable for those

thrown away and forgotten by punitive forces, is a 'radical situation' that calls forth, as a response of 'utmost seriousness', the creation of new subjectivities constructed using language that is adequate to experience. Frame's writing constituency is the world of postcolonial imagination in search of adequate language — from the beginning, her writing's appeal is to and for those who are engaged in this search.

In this sense, a writing practice that uses sensation, observation and synthesis as discussed earlier to construct non-standard subjectivities takes on its full implications as the creation of a '*collective* [my italics] assemblage of enunciation' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 13). Writing for herself, Frame is also writing out of a collective, to and for which she acts the part of observer-as-witness. In this chapter I will argue that from the beginning, from figures such as Daphne Withers in *Owls Do Cry* and Istina Mavet in *Faces in the Water*, through to Mavis Halleton/Alice Thumb in *Living in the Maniototo*, the 'I' of the volumes of autobiography and Mattina Brecon of *The Carpathians*, this role is articulated as part of the books' consciousness.

Frame's first novel, *Owls Do Cry* (1957), begins with an exposition of writing as a socially motivated process. In this, as in other respects, *Owls Do Cry* sets up conditions that apply throughout the body of her work. Using Blake's *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* and Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*, *Owls Do Cry* sets before readers an image of the silencing effects of the world of orthodoxy, the conditions of possible escape from that world, and the obligation placed on those who do escape to communicate their experience. Innocence — the achievement of flight — is seen as consequent on the struggle inherent in experience — the search for and discovery of lines of flight. The victory of this flight is that it permits 'escape without leaving', since it occurs by a transformation of language from within rather than by leaving language behind.

As discussed in Chapter Three, *Owls Do Cry* is introduced by an epigraph from Ariel's song in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Ariel sings, learning that he

is about to be freed. The 'airy Spirit' has been imprisoned, first by witchcraft in the hollow of a tree, and then in servitude to Prospero, master of the book, whose 'art ... made gape the pine' (*The Tempest* I, ii) in which Ariel was imprisoned. From inside the tree, Ariel can only groan 'as fast as mill-wheels strike' (*The Tempest* I, ii), making sounds like the 'music of curse and cry' (FW 90) witnessed by Istina Mavet in *Faces in the Water* (1961). Ariel's groans that are able to 'make wolves howl, and penetrate the breasts of ever-angry bears' (*The Tempest* I, ii) also recall the 'new language' imagined by Vera Glace in *Scented Gardens for the Blind* (1963) which might, Vera thinks, take the form of

a cry such as a bird makes or a beast lurking in the trees at night, or, loneliest of all, not the cry of a bird or beast but the first uttering of a new language which is understood by no one and nothing, and which causes a smoke screen of fear to cloud the mind, as defense against the strangeness. (SGB 10)

In *The Tempest*, source of Frame's epigraph and of the title for *Owls Do Cry*, Prospero is able to 'hear' these sounds without the 'smoke screen of fear' and recognise them as coming from a soul in torment rather than from the mineral or animal worlds. Diane Caney points out that Frame, describing in her essay 'Beginnings' the moment at which her own art 'made gape' the doors of the asylum

does not want her release from hospital to be a freedom in which she might become 'a useful member of the community'; she relishes instead the idea of a freedom in which she will become a poet. (Caney 165)

Caney argues that Prospero's release of Ariel 'to become a poet' involves Ariel's rendering in return a period of service to the master of the book. For 'a full year' Ariel must devote himself to Prospero's 'business'. Creative use of language comes to the rescue of speechlessness, but at the price, for a time, of a new kind of constraint: imagination must work in the service of creative



endeavour, and freedom comes 'after summer' when the cycle of work is complete. Further, I argue that for Frame, 'service' is not merely the servitude of apprenticeship in language, but a service of witness to the collective on behalf of those who never become free.

Part One of *Owls Do Cry* begins by reiterating this pattern of confinement followed by freedom that is conditional upon creative engagement with language: '*The day is early with birds beginning and the wren in a cloud piping like the child in the poem, drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe*' (ODC 9). The child 'in a cloud' refers to 'Infant Sorrow', one of Blake's *Songs of Experience*: 'My mother groand! my father wept./Into the dangerous world I leapt:/Helpless, naked, piping loud:/Like a fiend hid in a cloud' (Blake, *Complete Poems*, 129). The second part of the quotation, 'drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe' (ODC 9) is from Blake's 'Introduction' to the *Songs of Innocence*, which begins with the speaker's response to a child's injunction, first to 'pipe a song' and then to 'sing' — an explicit instruction to bring experience into language:

On a cloud I saw a child,  
And he laughing said to me:  
  
"Pipe a song about a Lamb."  
So I piped with merry cheer.  
...  
Drop thy pipe thy happy pipe,  
Sing the songs of happy cheer."  
(Blake, *Complete Poems*, 104)

The poem continues with the child's further injunction, not just to sing for the child alone, but to 'write' for 'all':

"Piper sit thee down and write  
In a book that all may read —"

So he vanished from my sight.

And I pluck'd a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,

And I stain'd the water clear,

And I wrote my happy songs

Every child may joy to hear.

(Blake, *Complete Poems*, 104)

Through and alongside the savage irony of introducing this — a story thefts of becoming, of characters confined, burned, silenced, driven mad — as a 'happy song', Frame is, nevertheless, also introducing *Owls Do Cry* as a response to a command to serve a collective need. She is signalling that she is about to embark on what will prove to be the construction of a practice of writing that will affirm the child's possibility of finding a line of flight from the 'dangerous world' into 'happy cheer'. After enacting a passage through the dangers of available language, this writing practice will posit a 'Contrary State' of innocence 'where the bee sucks', not as a prelude to experience, but as its hard-won consequence, a state where the 'after summer' world of mortality, uselessness, decay can be incorporated without negation.

*Owls Do Cry* obeys the imperative, for those who do find a way through to this kind of innocence, to 'write/in a book that all may read', fabulating lines of flight, making experiments in subjectivity for 'every child'. Despite everything, it is a 'happy song' in the sense that it is made by one of the fortunate, who, against the odds, has survived to find a voice, and who can therefore point to the possibility of recovery from the theft of becoming, both in general, as a human potential, and in particular, saying, 'this is how I did it, under these conditions'. There is no evasion of how dangerous the world is; (none of the book's central characters, the Withers children, survives psychically), but the storyteller does live to fulfil the injunction of the child in *Songs of Innocence*, passing on the possibility of speech, of lines of flight, a possibility that 'every child may joy to hear'.

In *Owls Do Cry*, the 'airy Spirit' of the book's subjective voice is still very close to its entrapment within the confines of orthodoxy, as it tells its stories of confinement and failure to find lines of flight out of 'the dead room' (ODC 9). The adjacency that is achieved, however, is that of Frame the survivor, the storyteller, whose presence is hinted at in the book only obliquely, as when the adult Toby Withers cries out to the river that is the only witness to his thoughts, 'Keep flowing then, and be damned. *But speak for me*' (ODC 91). Frame has said that 'one of the fascinations of writing ... is in the coding of what is written to describe what is not-written' (Mercer, *Janet Frame*, viii). While referred to only obliquely in *Owls Do Cry*, this dedication to acting as witness to the fates of the psychically (and sometimes in consequence physically) 'dead' is explicitly stated again and again within the narratives of later novels as a major motivation of the writing across the body of Frame's work.

Already in the second novel, *Faces in the Water* (1961), Frame writes the role of observer-as-witness into the character of Istina Mavet, who recognises in the 'wild voices' of the world of becoming-mad outside the man-standard the possibility of a language adequate to her experience, one that, because it 'says nothing ... permits saying [and] For that reason ... is a true "beginning"' (Certeau, *Heterologies*, 99). When at the end of her narrative Istina eventually walks free from the asylum, she clearly describes her story's origins in a sense of responsibility to speak:

I was going home ... I looked away from [the other inmates] and tried not to think of them and repeated to myself what one of the nurses had told me, "when you leave hospital you must forget all you have ever seen, put it out of your mind completely as if it never happened, and go and live a normal life in the outside world."

And by what I have written in this document you will see, won't you, that I have obeyed her? (FW 253-54)

The following year, the narrator of the next novel, *The Edge of the Alphabet* (1962), Thora Pattern, is just as clear about her motivation for attempting to speak. She is driven by her sense of the presence of those who have not survived and who refuse to allow her to 'forget all she has ever seen':

now I walk day and night among the leavings of people, places and moments. Here the dead, (my goldsmiths) keep cropping up like daisies with their floral blackmail. It is nearly impossible to bribe them or buy their silence. (EA 3)

Thora's search for speech is a collective one, her voice both of and with 'the dead ... like stray dogs that have picked up a scent ... they will follow until it leads them home ... One day we who live at the edge of the alphabet will find our speech' (EA 302). Similarly, in *Scented Gardens for the Blind* (1963), Vera Glace's quest to 'find the door into speech' (SGB 10), begun on her own account, is continued on behalf of a deathly familial microcosm of which Vera becomes aware as she carries out her search, and whose chief casualty is a daughter who has stopped speaking. As Vera puts it: 'as part of my solitary way of life I also have a silent daughter' (SGB 156), in a 'House that separates itself from the Cosmos and becomes the fetid home of the neuroses, the family house, when feeling is separated from what it can do' (Zourabichvili 199).

Two years on, the narrator of *The Adaptable Man* (1965) restates the collective role of the 'witch-novelist' in 'mixing a caldron of uneatables for others to observe, admire, shrink from' (AM 3), in the course of maintaining her concern with the fate of the 'dead' — the 'ill-arranged, unproductive, superfluous,' in 'an age which can be symbolized by an immense sewer where the dead are drained discreetly away' (AM 54). The following year, *A State of Siege* (1966) also refers to the collective role of the creative worker via the character of Malfred Signal who searches for a 'new view' to present to others as well as to herself. Malfred has been a high school art teacher whose paintings 'were prized for their water-colour likeness to the original scenes' (SS 5). The novel is concerned with her recognition, at fifty-three, of the

creative silencing of young girls in which she has been complicit, 'persuading schoolgirls to "match" the sides of shovels and vases, to make distant mountains distant, near faces near', and with her decision 'to rearrange her own "view," set against the measuring standards ... of the "room two inches behind the eyes"' (SS 8).

Frame's concern with the writer's responsibility not to 'forget all she has ever seen' of the theft of becoming, and to offer the collective a possibility of becoming-changed, also has its reflexive counter-concern — that of the responsibility of the collective vis-à-vis the artist, and this is presented as a parallel concern in the next two novels. The novel that follows *A State of Siege*, *Yellow Flowers in the Antipodean Room* (1968), published in New Zealand as *The Rainbirds*, places this reverse responsibility of the collective to the artist alongside the responsibility of the creative user of language to the collective. Its major character, Godfrey Rainbird, is presented as an observer of New Zealand life from the outsider-position of an immigrant. Having made a voluntary change in leaving England for New Zealand, he undergoes a second, involuntary transformation (as discussed earlier, this is Frame's hallmark of entry into writing subjectivity). This second change — experienced as a death by him and others — marks him out and causes him to experience his world differently from those around him, and to reflect his changed experience through the discovery of an 'icy spelling' that sees 'the word and its lining' (YF 159). As a consequence of the transformation he undergoes, he is persecuted by the collective. He loses his job, his children, his marriage, is treated as infirm in body and/or mind, and is then held responsible ('Putting himself about as a cripple when he's as healthy as the next man' (YF 220)) for these changes in the way he is perceived. *Yellow Flowers*, then, (perhaps not coincidentally published amid the collective euphoria of the summer of love), raises a question articulated later in *Daughter Buffalo* — an artist may win through, find lines of flight out of standard subjectivity, but

what ... of the dead novels and poems, the murdered words ... the  
volcanoës whose lava buried another life in me, cities I never  
knew, /sparkling cities with towers and jewels; the earthquakes which  
divided me, my time, my life, my sex. (DB 175)

What, in other words, of the counter-transformations for which the collective is responsible? *Yellow Flowers* is a sustained cry of protest at the loss and waste of observer-potential created by collective resistance (whether external or internalised) to artistic endeavour *after* initial breakthrough into becoming-changed. A year later the next novel, *Intensive Care* (1970) reiterates this cry as it personifies collective repression, in the character of Colin Monk, of the novel's observer figure Milly Galbraith, another practitioner of 'special spelling' (IC 242). Colin Monk is State-appointed enforcer of the Human Delineation Act, which determines who shall be considered human and who will be deemed to be an animal. With his 'notes ... on the time of the fires in Waipori city' (IC 342) after Human Delineation legislation has been enacted, he acts as a kind of terrible inverse of figures like Istina Mavet of *Faces in the Water*, witnessing to the suppression of any 'new music' that might be heard in a 'wild' (IC 223) voice such as that of the writer Milly Galbraith who uses the 'special spelling' of her 'own language' (IC 242) to confront available language. The journal-keeper Milly, as well as being an exponent of new language, is herself an observer-witness who enacts a sense of responsibility to the collective, writing her 'story about the Deciding ... to show everyone it is not right to decide about people, that dreadful mistakes are made that cannot be undone' (IC 232–33). Milly Galbraith's journals, after she and all her family have been killed, do in fact prove to be the means by which the Colin Monk, as representative of the collective, is brought to realise his 'dreadful mistake'. After reading the journals and showing them to his colleagues, he describes 'a strange sense of overturning, *renversé* ... I could feel the spring of being and feeling and moving as it was released' (IC 334).

The next two novels, *Daughter Buffalo* (1972) and *Living in the Maniototo* (1979), mark a return to a foregrounding of writer-characters who articulate

their sense of responsibility to those who have lost their speech. Both novels place animal-girls within the text as figures of theft-of-becoming, to whom writer characters feel responsible and who provide motivation for the work. In *Daughter Buffalo*, the writer Turnlung chooses as his 'daughter' a buffalo calf from New York's Central Park Zoo, who stands in the enclosure with her mother, looking 'as if they'd been offered the world, the earth and the sky, and they had to refuse, and couldn't explain the refusal' (DB 113). His writing, then, will be her inheritance and that of the disenfranchised collective who have 'immobility and ... bewilderment wearing away their lives' (DB 113) — writing is what he has to offer, so that they 'shall not be tricked or threatened by words' (DB 147). And in a move comparable to that of the 'overturning' experienced by Colin Monk in *Intensive Care*, Talbot Edelman, as representative of collective enforcement in *Daughter Buffalo*, finds that he has 'leased part of [his] life and memory' (DB 202) to Turnlung and his animal-daughter. Writers' acceptance of responsibility to speak with and from the 'dead', Frame would seem to be saying, does bring about changes in collective response, even if only after 'dreadful mistakes are made that cannot be undone.'

In *Living in the Maniototo*, twin wolf-girls, via the agency of a third who is closer in the narrative's time (the writer Mavis Halleton/Alice Thumb hears about Adelaide Garrett, lycanthropic daughter of the couple whose 'worldly goods' she inherits, and is reminded of the twins), act as both donors and inheritors of the work of the writer, exerting on her their 'immense influence from a distance of time and space' (LM 123). These characters are hieratic figures embodying the experience of 'death' that the writer 'can't ever forget' (LM 122) (Adelaide Garrett is literally dead, and the Martin twins are incarcerated), and they exist in the text as indexes of writing as witness. They appear from nowhere, introduced without preamble or explanation, and disappear once their presence has been registered. The multiplicity of these animal-girls, or in the case of *Daughter Buffalo*, the fantastical strangeness, announces the nature of their roles.

As discussed in Chapter Two and Three, this image of the young animal-girl provides a motivating figure in the unfolding of Frame's writing subjectivity, and as I am arguing now, such motivation extends to include a sense of collective responsibility. So it is then, that in the first volume of autobiography, *To the Is-Land* (1983), Frame offers as one of the 'most vivid' of her earliest memories that of 'the golden beastie in a velvet coat grazing near the fence — and of myself wearing my most treasured possession, a golden velvet dress, which I named my "beastie" dress' (TIL 16). Later in the same volume, she describes herself as being 'haunted' by a rhyme learnt in her early childhood: 'Hark hark the dogs do bark/the beggars are coming to town./Some in rags, some in bags,/and some in velvet gown' (TIL 34). This rhyme, she says, 'became confused in my mind' with the beggars or 'swaggers' who were 'coming to ask for food' (TIL 34) at the door at this time, during the Depression of the 1930s:

I'd think of the beggars and swaggers in rags and bags and beastie dress velvet, pursued by the barking dogs. I had been impressed, too, by the tales Mother told us in our Sunday Bible reading ... she explained that a poor man might come to the door and be refused food or even have the dogs 'sooled' on to him, and lo! he would turn out to be an angel in disguise or even Christ himself. (TIL 34)

Frame places the animal-girl dead-centre of this narrative in making her an autobiographical subject, and at the same time she identifies her with the collective world of the beggars and swaggers, to whom a responsibility is owed, and who possess the 'secret riches ... of "The kingdom"' (TIL 35). Thus in a single movement she installs the 'beastie'-child as a singular and a collective figure who is both origin and goal of her writing practice.

The novel *The Carpathians* (1988) which follows the volumes of autobiography, in keeping with its action of summarising subjective moves made to date throughout the body of Frame's work, echoes this combined singular and collective figuration of becoming-animal. Again it is offered as a



motivating impulse and responsibility both towards and from the collective, with regard to the creation of new subjectivities through writing. The text introduces the mute figure of Decima James, fifteen-year-old autistic daughter of two of the novel's characters, Gloria and Joseph James. On the brink of adulthood, she is about to suffer the banishment into oblivion that occurs when, like 'pop stars, puppies and kittens' the autistic 'lose attention' (TC 72). As a silent girl-child, Decima, who has 'never spoken' (TC 73) is familiar from earlier novels, and in *The Carpathians* as in earlier works she is a figure of that which the writer 'can't forget'. Decima James summons the subjective experience of isolation, 'unknown by herself or anyone' (TC 73) like the mystic in search of speech quoted by Michel de Certeau who says: 'It is a difficult and troublesome thing for a soul not to understand itself or to find none who understand it' (Certeau, *Heterologies*, 88). In pointing to this 'difficult and troublesome' experience, Decima also summons the writer's sense of responsibility to find speech so as to 'understand', to offer hope that those 'on the edge of the alphabet' can know and be known.

By including this reference to the 'puppy or kitten'-girl as 'unkown' in her speechlessness, Frame articulates the responsibility of the writer to 'know' as part of her role of writer-as-hypotenuse, one who stretches under, understands. And in a further move which foregrounds this role, *The Carpathians* (1988) makes the collective, as embodied by the people of Kowhai Street, Puamahara, the subjects of thefts of becoming to whom the text's writers are responsible. Like the 'barking, yelping, whimpering' (LM 122) of the wolf-children of *Living in the Maniototo*, the cries of the people of the town, suffering the collapse of language under the influence of the Gravity Star signal their participation in a 'rage' to communicate, to which the writer Mattina Brecon responds. From her earliest to her most recent work, Frame's texts articulate an understanding that saving her own life involves remaining aware of 'the dead'.

And so I read Frame's work for the first time as a child and the sensations she creates encircle me, letting me hear, at the moment of its transformation, the

flat timidity of the speech that is available to me. Her narrative structures and the figures who inhabit them are places where I can hear new patterning in language; changes in tone and pitch that say *pay attention here* — Frame's stories accomplish shifts of emphasis like those engendered by the 'lines in red print' she describes from the red-letter Bible of her childhood, saying 'it was years before I learned to respect the small words, the hinges and hooks' (Alley and Williams 42). These stories, these characters and the language that constructs them, point to the possibility that meaning can reside in the texture and alignment, the echoes and replications of words and images. They turn the idioms of my world into "'wild" voices' from the treasure-realm outside use, so that I recognise in them something adequate to my experience. Frame takes the speech of my home town and makes of it a 'new music of curse and cry'. Like the mystic poem described by Michel de Certeau, Frame's writing practice turns standard language into 'a cadenced repetition, "generative palilogy," subtle glossolalia', which, 'does not stop at deconstructing meaning and making it music':

it is what allows the very production of meaning. The "taste for echoes" awakened by the poem leads one "to seek a semantic connection between elements nothing binds together semantically"; it makes possible the indefinite prolongation of this semantical research as an echo effect. It says nothing. It permits saying. For that reason, it is a true "beginning". (Certeau, 1986, 99)

At my first encounter with her writing, Frame inducts me into the world of writerly language in the Barthesian sense, different from anything I have met before, demanding that I participate in the production of meanings. Up to this point, I have been a willing captive of readerly language, passively housed and clothed and fed by it, finding riches in the small and dark corners of its houses, the texture of the velvet dress, sharp taste and full belly, 'the literature streaming through', as Frame describes it, 'like an array of beautiful ribbons through the branches of a green, growing tree' (TIL 43). Before reading Frame, my longing to write has been a longing to replicate the comforts of

readerly experience, to move from reading the readerly to writing the readerly, in order to 'anchor that world within this everyday world' (TIL 48). I have wanted to imitate early, comforting mentors, knowing that if I try, if I persist and have time and luck, if I become a skilled tailor, nothing could clothe me more warmly, nothing could fit better than 'an imagination that would inhabit a world of fact, descend like a shining light upon ... ordinary life' (TIL 126). Happy, the readerly life; our words, our gardens and children and work, the food we prepare, even its tension and challenge all a sunlit mirror.

Writerly texts as exemplified in Frame's body of work reflect something like what de Certeau describes as the 'initiation into the reality of social practices' (Certeau, *Heterologies*, 41) experienced by those who undergo torture, in that they enact a 'passage from what is *said* outside to what is *practised* within' (Certeau, *Heterologies*, 41). It is a movement from reading and writing about the world and ourselves to feeling ourselves writing and written within it, located in those changing collective patterns called myth, 'recognisable as long as the human brain holds some stem (of crystal, bone, iron, stone, gossamer)' (TC 126).

Feeling herself to be folded into language, formed by it, the writer gains agency, knowing herself to be an active feature of 'a *real* that is no longer guaranteed by a Father' (Certeau, *Heterologies*, 43). When Frame enacts through her writing the experience of being relegated to the status of other, or, as she says in an interview with Elizabeth Alley: 'For many years I was a third person — as children are' (Alley, *Inward Sun*, 40), she both confirms the experience and repositions 'the lonely, nude I' (DB 175) that is its subject, in 'a movement that is neither denial nor perversion. It would be something to the effect of: "*I am only that, but so what?*"... There is some real that survives' (Certeau, *Heterologies*, 42–3). As Ian Buchanan argues in a discussion of the value of 'appropriation' in Deleuze as 'a path to freedom':

If the prisoner is an other, then what must be found is a means of expressing, simultaneously, otherness as an insular identity with its own sovereign power *and* otherness as a deplorable state of oppression ... an imprisoned person can simultaneously conform to an imposed “foreign” order *and* subvert that order. Because the social structure defining the parameters of people’s lives — oppressed or otherwise — has to be enunciated by them in order to be actualized, it is always available to appropriation. The passively formed subject is always *becoming* active. (Buchanan, *SAQ*, 488)

What Frame offers is the possibility of extraordinary relief, not to have to live in either capitulation or denial, holding up the world by an effort of will, holding out the dark by constructing, containing all meaning within the little circle of quotidian consciousness. We can breathe again, having lived in language a movement from meaning experienced as given from outside, to meaning experienced as constructed from within, to meaning given and received as a conversation. We discover that we are part of a process of making meaning, not because the ‘real that survives’ exists *for* us; on the contrary, it is its ‘otherness ... from which neither aid nor justification [is] forthcoming, to which [we] are no use and could not offer [our] services’ (Certeau, *Heterologies*, 43), which guarantees that we are not alone. *We* are part of *it*, this ‘real’ that is ‘other’ in that it is wider than any subjectivity we might currently inhabit, and in recognising this, we become agents of the meaning of our own existence. This is not an existentialist huff — Father has gone so we’ll have no meaning — but a choice to invest the world with patterns and motivations through our stories about how things are, knowing they are *our* stories.

Why is it that the experience of the ‘other real’ to which we are ‘no use’ and which offers us ‘neither aid nor justification’ can nevertheless be one that allows us to hold out against annihilation, even gives us the feeling that it bends towards us with something like love? I think it must be because, always extending ahead of us into the realm outside available language, it figures for

us — and perhaps exists within — the world of bodily experience, in the terrible faithfulness of the body that ‘bears witness in silence, flames and immobility’ (*EMC* 101), continuing to breathe in and breathe out for as long as it can. The body goes snuffing ahead in the dark; it is expert in languages for which we do not even know that a vocabulary exists; it knows everything about what it is that rides us. My body is the animal helper that is me if only I will notice it, learn its needs and its way of being in the world. It is capable of responding to and within language, but it is also capable of widening the matrix within which language exists, or of widening the range of materials that make up the text. And this is also the range of matter we have at hand with which to make up our stories of how things are. By living as a body that is continuous, contiguous with the universe of language, we are able to tell alternatives to the story of self locked in the back ward of the lonely nude I. Expanding the notion of speaking and listening to include the possibility of a story in smell or touch radically revises the speech with which we describe the world. For this reason, perhaps, a major theme of myth everywhere is the necessity to make friends with the animals, because without them the transforming journey is impossible. Repudiation, betrayal of the bodily self is at the heart of failure to cross over, cross out of the back ward and into renewed conversation with the world. And what brings about this repudiation is that we feel the necessities of crossing as betrayal by the body; to find ourselves uttering that ‘barking, yelping, whimpering’ (*LM* 122) that is a reformulation of the world is an experience that can be mistaken for loss of language, possession by something that wants to drag us back down, wrestle us into darkness and silence. It is certainly possible to respond to the threat of an experience that is ‘hard to think of ... as human’ (*LM* 123), by binding it, getting it out of sight somehow, smoothing away, drowning it, even at the cost of having to put up with ‘now and then ... a wet ... shape with teeth set in a skeleton snarl, rising to the surface’ (*TIL* 52).

That which is bodily does not desire to bring language to an end, recognising as part of its landscape ‘a word here, a word there; a planet or star or two above the prairie’ (*DB* 147). It shares the moment of crossing over, the liminal

point where light becomes confused, dazzlingly bright or insufficient, 'howling with an unearthly note of searching and despair' (*TC* 126) its experience of the physical consequences for a self in need of new stories. At this moment the body becomes agent for the stupid bird of soul that has learned to feel itself as separate and is at risk of being 'destroyed as those birds are which fly unknowingly, blindly, into skyscrapers and passing planes because they are unable to grasp the fact of their substance' (*DB* 114). In bringing its knowledge of needs and processes of connection — that which comes from living as continuous surface — eating, drinking, breathing, the body can extend conception of what is possible, literally feeling, sensing its way through new story. Arrested crossings are those in which alliance failed or was refused; when the homely fires consume us and the story then is of a 'soul ... confined within' (*DB* 114), locked in the back ward of the lonely nude I, a 'body without organs ... already under way the moment the body has had enough of organs and wants to slough them off, or loses them' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Plateaus*, 150). The skeleton snarl will rise again and again for as long as it takes to realise that what we seek to rid ourselves of, what we assume we can jettison is our capacity for 'bewilderment' (*DB* 113), a signalling of and orienting into new language for a new (to us) world. We cannot 'get better if [we put our] minds to it' (*TIL* 72), indeed the last thing we can afford to do is put our minds to it, attempting in our death studies to become vivisectors, stubbornly mutilating the steady presence of whatever exists on the edge, at the crossing-over out of our experience of the human, in order to confirm the stories we already tell, bringing what is out there back within the boundaries of the known. We must simply endure the moment of loss, of burning away, a time when it is hard to think of ourselves as human, learning as we are the elasticity of things, trusting that with time, with luck, the thread of some new music will be audible. Then we will be able to bring back new stories about what it might be to be human, not to the old world — that is gone by virtue of our new experience of ourselves — but to the world of language. We will have become the Envoy, able to travel to the terrible place of the Midas touch and return; a body that is also angel, angel that is body; a unity, in the act of story, of living *and* expressing.

What Frame offers and invites us to participate in as readers and as writers is language that burns. For her and with her, the discourse has moved on — stories that once satisfied now provide no shelter, no velvet, no full contented mouth; the greatest loss is not the loss of these comforts but of the assurance of rescue — what used to work is no longer effective. Burning is the place of crossing over from the readerly to apprenticeship<sup>1</sup> in the writerly, entering into *conversation* — ‘having one’s being in or among’ awareness of the operations of language. Gone the sunlit world in a puff of smoke, burned away by death, bodily death or any of its proxies: incarceration, hunger, absence, mutilation, the unresolvable ending of some life-deep hope. Frame’s practice enacts the shift — she writes like an angel, a Rilkean angel, terrible as the lightning that shredded her own sky, shock that erased all but its own indelible memory. Her writerly use of language makes literature a practising-ground, a place to experience new selves any moment in history demands we become. Building on itself by means of extensions, launching itself from some point reached in a previous construction, the work is a record of the experience of time, the new always constructed from elements of the old, new shoots from the plain of ashes. Frame practises dying in the deaths of her characters, the taste, the feel of loss, disintegration; the flash ‘which, from the beginning of time, gives a dense and black intensity to the night it denies’ (Foucault, *Language*, 35). She sits, savage angel at her table, and sits me with her as I read, sending the bolt through fictional lives — what shall I give you? loss of speech? of home? of lover? of memory? — I send disasters so that you/I can tell of them; let us wrestle till break of day, we will both by then have ‘suffered or enjoyed shocks and surprises’ (EMC 83). This is the arena, the field of ‘death studies’ where again and again the angel tries on humanity, discards and tries on a succession of lives, ‘*squamata, sauria, serpentes*’ (DB 212) in the museum, the sanctuary of memory which is imagination, imagination which is memory.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Stivale theorises practices of becoming in terms of Deleuze and Guattari’s idea of apprenticeship through ‘friendship, or intermezzo (working with or between each other), and a relationship with “the outside” based on *intercesseurs* (mediators) [which] “can be people ... but things too ... Whether they’re real or imaginary, animate or inanimate, you have to form your own mediators” [Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 125] (Stivale 518).

Crossing over into writing, Frame invites and warns, is a violent abduction into 'a territory of loneliness which ... resembles that place where the dying spend their time' (*AMT* 96). Our desire becomes our necessity — we must spin for dear life out of our own bodies and what comes to us from the world, not replacements for what is lost but something entirely new, never again taking or making that which does not contain some living tissue of our own that will 'quiver, being touched or even glanced at' (*AMT* 185). The place we are in is a new language, 'dislodged from the literary world and housed with the animal cries, among the first earliest deaths' (*DB* 75), where words are parts of speech along with silence and for a moment, in its skinlessness, the self is co-extensive with the world, the gaze inclusive:

a unique point of view that is a nightmare, a treasure, and a lifelong possession; at times I think it must be the best view in the world, ranging even farther than the view from the mountains of love, equal in its rapture and chilling exposure. (*AMT* 96)

This place of great danger is what Frame offers as payment and consolation to the collective from which she emerges and (be)for(e) whose members she speaks. In this place — the writerly realm with its 'Midas effect' — it is impossible to live, but if we survive our sojourns there the experience serves as a touchstone, an organising principle. Language, faithful, bodily, with the persistence of cellular life, begins immediately to reclothe, to make familiar what is around us if we enter this place, but from now on we will be unable to forget that instant in the speechlessness of loss, when among sounds 'like the first cries of those who had never known or spoken words ... there came a hint, an inkling of order, a small strain recognisable as music' (*TC* 126). And our longing even after language has done its work, filling the gaps to give us seamless shelter, is to return to that place where our words (that is, our sounds) and the sounds and silences of the world become words in a sentence.



If Frame's writing shows evidence of a sense of indebtedness towards, and awareness of responsibility to the collective, my experience is that this sense of a body of work informed by urgent necessities has been a powerful source of change for me as a reader. That this experience of Frame's peculiar capacity to touch the lives of her readers is shared by others, and particularly by other writers, has been repeatedly borne out by responses to her work. An instance is provided by *The Inward Sun*, a collection of written responses edited by Elizabeth Alley for Frame's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, comprising thirty-eight personal accounts — twenty-three of them from fiction writers and another eleven from academics — mostly coming from New Zealanders of both European and Maori descent, expressing the ways in which Frame's work 'has changed the lives of so many of her readers' (Alley, *Inward Sun*, 2).

What contributors describe again and again regarding their encounter with the work is a sensation of amazed recognition followed by an experience of empowerment. In part they attribute this to the discovery, in reading Frame's writing, of what Barbara Anderson describes as a 'world nobody knew anything about ... but me. A country of childhood ... given the authority and permanence of print' (Alley, *Inward Sun*, 108). All affirm that Frame's vision of childhood draws much of its power from an absolute refusal of the saccharine. As Fiona Farrell puts it: 'Here was someone who took horrors which squirmed in my own mind, and turned them, miraculously, into literature' (Alley, *Inward Sun*, 125). This is not simple recollection, but a synthesis that offers readers both the sensations of 'treasure'-experience permissible only to children in the culture she constructs, and the sensations of the theft of this treasure and the revoking of permission. For 'the young, the in-love and the defeated in love' as Gregory O'Brien says — for all of us, that is — 'the writing is capable of filling a need. Because her work so urgently rises out of a need' (Alley, *Inward Sun*, 80). Again and again Frame's power of sensation, observation, transformation in writing is acknowledged as a source of potential for change, by a process summarised in the words of Fiona Kidman, who says: 'I saw my own face in the deep water ... it became possible to think through what, before, had been unthinkable' (Alley, *Inward Sun*, 69). And by extension, another facet of the sense of recognition and

empowerment arises from a realisation that when 'her polyphonic texts awaken countervoices' as Anna Grazia Mattei puts it, making it possible to think the unthinkable, 'daring readers ... sometimes ... even embark upon speech' (Alley, *Inward Sun*, 181). 'Hearing a secret cadence of my voice in yours' (Alley, *Inward Sun*, 38), Lauris Edmond and others can conclude with Keri Hulme, 'A book can be written by someone who lives here./You can use your own language./You can write your own story' (Alley, *Inward Sun*, 197).<sup>2</sup>

It is perhaps unnecessary to state that a tribute such as that composed by *The Inward Sun* from writers to another writer is unusual, and in this case one that marks a collective recognition of a gift of empowerment relating to the creation of subjective 'room' in voice and in place. Accounts in the collection affirm the possibility that writing, and Frame's writing in particular, can both affirm experience for readers and writers and turn it into a line of flight — we find our place on the page, and the page transforms the place we find ourselves in. We go away and look again.

Patrick Evans is a writer who approaches most effectively the circulation of authority/recognition/empowerment that accompanies readings of Frame such as those described by contributors to *The Inward Sun* — 'personal responses' that come from and are directed towards a personage who is understood to model their experience of empowerment. This may be in part because, as Evans describes it, he has experienced being 'vigorously and efficiently rebuffed' in his attempts 'to find ... some kind of origin for her writing', being turned by Frame, he says, 'into a sort of critical *paparazzo*' (Evans, *JNZL*, 16–17). This response to his attempts to historicise Frame's body of work has forced Evans to examine her work as 'a project against history, against time

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<sup>2</sup> Jean-Michel Salanskis describes this effect in a discussion of Deleuze's treatment of the function of learning: 'Deleuze writes that it is after ... the swimming instructor explains and demonstrates the movements on sand that real apprenticeship begins, in the course of which the student combines his distinctive points with those of the water, and in a sense actualizes his movements ... I would say that whatever the descriptive accuracy of Deleuze's example as regards the personal element of apprenticeship ... I remain attached to the interlocutory space of the human act of swimming, what I express is also the genius of a combination of gestures whose example I faithfully follow. All learning is an understanding as well' (Salanskis 78).

itself'<sup>3</sup> (Evans, *JNZL*, 16) and to approach the 'Janet Frame' whose imagined accompaniment is important to readers such as the contributors to *The Inward Sun* as 'a product ... hyperreal' (Evans, *JNZL*, 18) of her own writing. In the end, Evans concludes, it is Frame's very invisibility, her hyperreality — the way her 'texts often invite us to identify the writer-in-the-text with the writer of the book' (Evans, *JNZL*, 18) so that she seems 'to offer herself as a text outside her own texts, a text which we help to write' (Evans, *JNZL*, 20) — that gives her writing its 'distinctive quality ... the capacity to reach into our lives and speak for us' (Evans, *JNZL*, 19).

This Frame, then, who disappears into her own writing allowing us to possess and appropriate her, is the figure who acts as both inciter and mentor with regard to writerly practice, like those writers she read as a young woman, of whom she says, 'They may not have known it but they were *company* for me, their very breath kept me warm and dispelled my grief' (*EMC* 125). Her texts fill us with the restlessness and longing engendered by writerly work, and, if we embark on our own attempt to write, her ('hyperreal') presence acts as a promise that it is possible to live through the precipitate flights of becoming-changed. Community of this kind, even (especially) if we never meet, confirms a sense that the world contains others who want to write, that it is a valuable thing to do, that some have survived the terrors of this work whose prerequisite is 'to be at the terrible point of loss and stay there, wanting to write, wanting in, not out' (*LM* 72). We grope through our own writing and the writing of a written community for hints, inklings of approaches to a writerly practice which leaves space for words-which-are-not-us, even if we manage no more than clumsiness, gaps, joins that point to words and silence of the world. And when we talk about writing we talk about 'coding what is written to describe what is not written', and we say, with Frame 'I like to think of the contents of a book as a signpost to a world that is not even mentioned' (Mercer, *Janet Frame*, viii).

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<sup>3</sup> As noted in the introduction, I would argue that this 'project against history' has a historical term in Frame's sense of her own establishment of adequate subjective ground, evidenced in her authorisation of Michael King's biography, forthcoming in June 2000.

Writing community: to build and maintain a sense of being supported in one's 'urgent need' to create subjective breathing space through the construction of new selves in language. To hold in oneself, by creating for others, a sense of solidarity, of shared possibility. In an essay on Frame's writing as a reflection of her survival strategies, the psychiatrist Ken Bragan uses Heinz Kohut's self-object theory as a way of approaching the organisation of the subjective realms she creates. Terms such as 'self', and phrases such as 'cohesion of the self' which appear in the discussion which follows are used in this context — an examination of how it is possible to maintain a subjectivity that coheres around a determination to survive and bring about change in a hostile environment.

Kohut's term 'self-object' refers to 'an object that, or a person who, is used by a subject in the service of the subject's self' (Lichtenberg et al. 122). Self-objects — our experiences of the people, places and events that give us a sense of 'cohesion and vitality of the self' (Lichtenberg et al. 131) — 'create, and exist in, an inner space which both holds and sustains the self' (Bragan 134). As an example of the function of self-object as 'guardian of the self' (134) Bragan offers the relationship in *Intensive Care* between Milly Galbraith and the Livingstone pear tree, which Milly describes as being 'like ... some kinsiderate creature':

a place for me to be when there are not many places in the world just to be ... you can't leave any part of yourself in those other places ... but under the Livingstone pear tree I alway find myself waiting. (IC 2993)

Bragan describes Frame's autobiographical writing as a figuration of the utilisation of self-objects in the service of survival under adversity:

*To the Is-Land* suggests the emergence of the self, the angel of *An Angel at My Table* can be seen as the presence of the self-object that establishes the self, and *The Envoy from Mirror City* becomes the self venturing out from its well-consolidated inner world. (Bragan 134).

Frame's writing and the 'hyperreal' 'Janet Frame' who accompanies the work can be understood to act as self-objects, as '*company*' in the community of those who are attempting to construct selves in writing against the grain of available language. But as Bragan points out, self-objects 'require some external representation, and replenishment by ongoing experience' (Bragan 134) just as for Frame herself, he suggests, the material presence of 'her copy of Shakespeare' (Bragan 136) acted as self-object during the extreme deprivation of her years in hospital. In the same way, Frame's novels, constructed by her as external souls, houses, camps on the plain of subjectivity, are there for us too.

If we are to create a community of writing arising out of responsiveness to the 'immense influence' of the dead, subjects of thefts of becoming — arising also out of the desire and necessity to sustain that response — how are we to 'replenish' in an ongoing way our experiences of the places where we 'can always find ourselves waiting'? One Saturday afternoon I go to a poetry reading a friend has told me about at a city pub. A few dozen people in groups or singly, wearing their subcultures on their sleeves, ranging from just-out-of-school age to seventy-something. First an open section, then a 'featured reader'. The session organiser takes the names of those who want to read in the open section and one after another they go to the microphone. Much of the work is indifferent, some of it is wonderful. The response given to 'bad' work is as intense as that given to 'good' — silent attention and loud applause. What's going on here? I come back another week, and another — the same quite large crowd of regulars, others who occasionally show up. Groups barrack for nervous friends. Some in the audience have obviously come for a particular reader they've heard before. The same mix of work. Why is such lack of discrimination tolerated, I ask my friend — how does the gathering persist? *It saves lives*, she says.

Writing is a place where private self and public self come together; imagination meets available language. Reading for an audience can be an

experience of release in performing the meeting of these two realms, if the audience is able to act as witness to *an intention to speak*. The reader saves lives by attesting before the group to the possibility of speech. The group-as-witness saves lives because it supports and adds its strength to the huge effort it takes to hold intention-to-speak as an alternative to silence or being spoken.

I follow the thread of readers' work week after week. Most of the work that's read is largely driven by a longing to speak, a sense of urgent necessity arising from some theft of becoming, some gap in available language that leaves the reader unconstituted. Sometimes changes begin to happen: the group's witness and acknowledgement of intent makes a container strong enough to hold imagination until it can find adequate form, adding collective desire to the writer/reader's desire to keep trying for a line of flight, to keep trying for adequate language. The readings provide a space where collisions between imagination and available language are permitted. Varieties of sensation are voiced; the group acts as observer and synthesiser, creating an overlapping of transparencies, bringing about a leap into three dimensions. The energy of music emerges.

Six women, meeting every month for five years. Poems, novels, short stories, travel writing. We share a meal, hear one another's work-in-progress, offer our responses. Members of the group come and go, but group-as-entity, as a series of connections, continues. It is a manifold in itself. Works, genres, images, cultures, ages and experiences fold and touch. Whatever is added to the group's substance changes it and is changed in the process. What is known, familiar, collapses where the folds touch; new language arises from the shattering of what is no longer adequate. We are company for one another, a community of texts each with its secret life, making a secret life together in the city of language. Separately and together we are manifold and the possibility of manifold, representing possibilities of transformation. Of course, a group-standard keeps appearing, attempting to limit what may be said, forming around whatever seems to challenge our cohesion — particular

genres, discursive styles, personal idiosyncrasies, perhaps the glitter of rage. Each of us carries our own standard with us.

One of the women speaks for most of us when she says: *The group gave me the confidence to call myself a writer. We intend to speak* — as in the case of the weekly readings at the pub, the group is witness, container, generator of processes by which speech happens for each of us. It is a place where words can be tried. At the beginning, few of us had had work published — ‘calling myself a writer’ was not a claim to something conferred by publication or earned by experience; it was a declaration of passion — writing was what I wanted more than anything else. The group was a place where such a declaration could be made and remade.

When I joined I had been writing for a few months after a break of many years, since at seventeen, a time when I still longed for the safety of the standard — its resolutions and fixed meanings — I had been unable to withstand the horror of finding that incoherent rage and grief were demanding to be spoken. Finding, years later, rage and grief turned into musical weaponry in the poetry of Gwen Harwood ripped me awake and into longing. She reminded me that writing is not just a record of encounter with structures that forbid; it *is* the encounter, and if those structures can be filled with the resonances of what is forbidden ... If language is the city of the law, writing is the uses its citizens make of it that cross and recross its purposes, and while writing can be an act of self-declaration, it is also a way of staying hidden. Members of the group provide community in the struggle to find alternative ways to inhabit the city of language and to survive there at cross-purposes with its structures, an underclass that knows its terrain. In the group, the joy of a successful raid can be shared, joy of ‘passing’ in order to get food, clothing, joy of knowing the hidden ways. And perhaps, in the dark or by stolen electricity, out of sight or in places the rulers of the city no longer/do not yet dare to go, houses might be made with fragments — ‘of crystal, bone, iron, stone, gossamer’ — houses whose shapes match their inhabitants. Subterfuge inside subterfuge, hiding out in the city of language, making secret houses to

please ourselves with writing that follows our contours, so that with the right hearing, we are hidden and we are found.



## 5 Poems from the Maniototo

My own becoming-in-language, then. In the course of reading Frame I have been writing, too, poems that are responses to the novels and which map subjective shifts I have undergone in the process of engaging with her work. Michel de Certeau says 'Every story is a travel story' (Certeau, *Practice*, 115), and these poems trace my own chronology or itinerary of change, written as part of the wandering I embarked on when I began a chronological reading of Frame's novels. The poems are both a personal record and a way of modelling for myself how 'faithful attention to the imaginal world, this love which transforms mere images into presences, gives them living being' (Hillman 85) can become a collective resource for change — a 'remythologising'. This is how I have experienced Frame's work, and now I'm approaching for myself the place where theorising imagination of intellect folds into the intelligence of images, a doubling of becoming by which 'faithful attention' makes possible the creation of changed subjective territories. I have argued in earlier chapters that remythologising is a primary effect of the kind of creative endeavour enacted by Frame's work, in that the work restructures collective subjectivity through its use of language, an intention which Frame herself articulates when she says at the opening of her autobiography:

From the first place of liquid darkness, within the second place of air and light, I set down the following record with its mixture of fact and truths and memories of truths and its direction always toward the Third Place, where the starting point is myth. (*TIL* 9)

I offer here an account of 'getting lost' in Frame's writing, and in the writing of Michel de Certeau, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. My understanding of the operations of language and my writing practice have been changed in the course of this engagement. The poems, and their commentary, form a microhistory — an enactment of, and a meditation on, processes of de/re/theorising as a writing practice that are the subject of my thesis.

### *Dazzle*

From the beach where I drowned,  
boats smack down big surf.  
Hands pulled ropes of water from me;  
I lived again, a little life, a smudge of flame  
in sand, in bone-gardens left by the ripple  
that follows the moon around.  
Sea-doors of my heart clanging useless against breath,  
that way was cleared, the scorched road into light —  
only the sound of the sea for comfort then.

Smear of blood on the house-wall —  
the girl's grazed face — I know how it is,  
mixed the render myself,  
hands raw in hardening clay,  
hiding inside the things I've made.

What can I bring from the well of myself  
after such a sleep? —  
years in the heavy grammar of a foreign tongue.

Something coming apart in my chest,  
screech of metal or bones;  
a gate drags open onto black,  
dazzle that the wind can't shift;  
black tendrils and roots go down  
through all the space there is.

Little vine in the night courtyard,  
ripe fruit and rotten —  
find the clean flesh, find the stone;  
darkness where a seed might split;  
see how soul limps out,  
shakes its curled wing,  
claps the air.

As a young girl lost in the 'stark geometry' of 1960s small town New Zealand pakeha culture, I first discovered Frame's novels, and she became 'company for me', a kind of elder, an ancestor to whom I could refer for wilderness tips. My family, like hers and so many others, was constituted in the dislocations in place, in meaning and in economic stability that characterise colonial experience, even after generations in a new country. Engagement with Frame's writing was the first line of flight I experienced, as a reader encountering a presence in language that could literally make sense of my world by re-presenting it to me transformed. Like so many readers before me, I no longer felt myself to be alone in the same way, having entered/taken in a world created by a written work. The young girls of *Owls Do Cry* and *Intensive Care* looked out through my eyes, and so did the writer who had found a way to construct them in words. Having an awareness of these presences meant that I acquired a way of being in the world that encompassed both my old sense of constraint and of being silenced in some way I could not articulate, but also brought a new sense that it might be possible — Frame had shown it to be possible — to change, by naming, that very experience of constraint. The silence could be spoken, and spoken about — writing could account for both the shape of the experience and the space around it.

In *Living in the Maniototo*, Frame offers the image of a 'bloody plain' as a place from which writing emerges. Her figuration makes use of a geological description of the high country of Central Otago in the South Island, an area that feels to me like another planet in my country's back yard. Barren, geometrical, dusty in the summer sun and snowbound in winter, with here and there, unbelievably it seems to me, a little stone shelter built by a nineteenth century miner, a wall across the front of a shallow cave in the lee of some rock formation. Little camp of a treasure-seeker, abandoned now across a fold in time and desire, overgrown by the flowering arches of encroaching wild roses that so trouble those who try to farm in those parts, trapping the silly sheep that stand, caught by a thorn or two, till they die and their bones 'show luminous, knitted with force and permanence' (EA 3). This, then, is where I encounter Janet Frame.

*Ancestors*

Crouched in thickets of myself,  
who are these faces looking out of me?

I am shapes and spaces of the plain,  
inhabitants stepping forward, heavy bodies;  
their feet have made my paths,  
their voices echo through me, familiar music.  
Ancestors, witnesses shared by so many  
laugh and beat time  
along avenues that frame and hide.

Inside my chest, the moon  
describes its arc,  
white knuckles rattling the sticks  
of my breastbone.  
I am in company.  
The plain is limitless.

Landscape as subjectivity, subjectivity as landscape — a (familiar) way of thinking, this figuration offered by Frame-as-ancestor, which she also has inherited from her 'company' of writers. And this alongside her figuration of writing as 'exploration', 'seeing what pattern emerges' (Alley and Williams 46). Writing as a way of finding patterns in the bloody plain. But also, given her delight and terror in the polysemic dimensions of words, exploration as 'searching out' and 'discovery' (*OED*) in a contested space, by '*pioneers* and the *surveyors* with their *white feet* or their *white foot*, like a snail's foot' (*TIL* 72), and exploration as the surgical probing of a wound. I walk around, then, touch feel taste in this landscape of the self she offers, understanding it as patterned space and othered space, battleground and wound. What I find is the sensation of composition, of being constituted by presences I have inherited — a self that consists in modes of habitation of and by them. I find that subjective space is not amorphous, not uniform, but composed of particular intensities, and patterned by the movements of those intensities or presences. They persist as habits of language use, habits of rhythm, of figuration, which I follow like trodden paths — it's an inhabited landscape, but there are still many places where nobody goes and little tracks fading to nothing as if their makers had suddenly taken flight. These habits of presence and absence determine the conformations of the landscape. I am made of the trodden places and the voices that pass along them, and also I am made of silences. Present to me but shared by many, ancestors create the landscape as they go, this space under the sky which they unroll before them — look! the moon is coming up!

When I began reading Frame's work with the intention of writing about it, I realised that I was experiencing each novel as if it were a place of presence, a camp on the bloody plain, site of reconnaissance and incursion and diagnosis. Her first novel, *Owls Do Cry* (1957), is a camp built by an escapee, a survivor, reconstructing, so as to understand, the world of the fathers, who are as hopelessly locked inside their names as any daughter is. The fathers construct the dumb and dark room for themselves as much as for anyone. They *are* the dead room and the voice that calls from it.

*Patronymic*

Father,  
a year after your death,  
your name  
rattles off the keys,  
a lower-case typo  
like a noise  
through the grating of text.

Words can be salt too,  
the sting, the taste,  
the glitter at the root.

Another season;  
black magnolias open  
in Fitzroy Gardens;  
some of the buds are bitten.  
Searchlights sprout  
like snails' eyes  
over the park;  
my angry heart  
a little fist,  
waving away.

Bar sinister across the town,  
all your generation  
were kings' sons:  
the city is bright  
with your tracks,  
your houses spiral around you,  
one turn at a time.

Dissolving into earth now,  
your words, my salt.

Imagine a writer who has found a line of flight, set up camp for herself in a place where she can begin to explore, perhaps looking back at the city, for 'forbidden to turn, many do, many turn, and all the tears of a lifetime congeal, redirecting the winds and the sun' (LM 13). What is it like, having this space to 'turn', to create the 'fixed salt being' (LM 14) of writing, which is 'the essence of having turned or attended'? The writer sits in the immensity of the plain, free now to rename its features, making her own experiments in selection and combination, claiming the power of arbitration for herself, free to say 'bob' instead of 'boy', to make the unimaginable shift from the global to the particular — 'boy' is not 'bob', 'bob' is not 'boy'. She has left her father's house, which seemed the whole world, but which through her new habit of attention, having 'turned', can now be known to be another landscape built from the accretions of language, inhabited by presences in language. Imagine the writer angry enough, in this knowledge, to contest the plain's construction in the paths of the man-standard, the surveyor's 'white foot like a snail's foot' marking out what shall be garden and who shall eat of its fruit, keeping it under surveillance. Imagine the writer in a book like *Owls Do Cry* laying waste the father's house, that 'big barn' 'that can be burned down without trace of the harvest' (IC 217), sowing its ground with salt while creating new features of her own landscape, her 'salt form' 'sparkling and strong and at rest ... with its composition of laughter and tears, once thought to be a useless erosion of the standing-place, the "spirit"' (LM 14).

'Patronymic' is in part a bitter joke about the combined possibilities of claiming and repudiation implicit in naming, foundational act of construction through language. Sitting in Fitzroy Gardens in the middle of an Australian city it seemed to me that the name was a good instance of this double movement. Fitzroy — (illegitimate) son of the king, with added colonial resonances, the name of a hated governor standing in for the grid of meaning imposed like a city plan on the subjective landscape.

Frame's second novel, *Faces in the Water* (1961), also 'turns' and 'attends' to a particular house in the city of the plain, creating the 'salt being' of the

asylum, the back ward, place of relegation for those who survive into adulthood but are unable to capitulate to the Name. This is where the voice of the trickster is first heard speaking from the text, stating its purpose, creating the camp of the asylum in order to escape it, a survivor documenting her incarceration so as not to forget how it works and for whom. She will not waste the stilling, the distilling that has happened. The writer listens to the acoustics of the new landscape she is forming around her. When she listens now, from this new space, do the cries from within still sound the same? Must sounds from the unknown spaces of the plain always be heard as 'horrifying cries' (*TC* 126)? What can she say if she no longer speaks from the dead room? When the father's house falls down, where does she live? She has to listen to the speech of the body, even its possibility of complete silence and the end of every shelter. But it's the survivor who writes, and she writes this place because she knows it, and knows it in language. The writer is also 'Maui's sister' (*LM* 11), sister, that is, of the old trickster who knew how to catch and beat up the sun to make it move at a human pace; who knew how to bloody his own nose to bait a hook and bring up worlds out of the sea. The road down to the city under the sea doesn't have to be the road into silence. The net of music can be thrown very wide, can slow things down and remake a world of experience in the space of a few heartbeats.

Writing is a liminal activity, not only because the writer is driven by a need to go out to the edges of things in order to leave behind constraints of the too-well-known, but also because that's where the work likes to happen. It is at 'corners, crossroads, shores, boundaries' that 'the helpers, human, animal, insect or vegetable ... make or find time to stand' (*TC* 11). Representatives of a becoming-self must always by definition seem other, and even if they appear human, they are governed by the trickster rules of this country beyond the pale where the writer can find those parts of her life that the man-standard wants 'cleaned away' (*IC* 217). Here on the edge of sleep or sanity the writing happens, and the liminal space that is the 'terrible point of loss' (*LM* 72) becomes not only a 'nightmare', but also a 'treasure and a lifelong possession' (*AMT* 96).



*Still*

What can be said  
from this place?  
Blood, sweat  
the body's dumb words;  
drop by drop  
a wandering sentence.

There is a road.  
It goes down into silence.

Syllables of my name  
roll underfoot,  
all the known ways smashed,  
my palaces rubble.  
I watch the shapes of wind  
through twigs of each night's shelter.

Meteors swarm across this sky,  
light up the inside of my head.

Ambushed, then,  
on the edge of sleep  
by music,  
I am a flickering procession.

Trickster knows this country well;  
secret pockets, folds and creases;  
gets treasure here,  
these trceries,  
nets to haul up the sun.

Words have become sounds for inmates of the asylum — can sounds become words? Can new music, new language be exchanged as well as uttered and heard? The next two novels, *The Edge of the Alphabet* (1962) and *Scented Gardens for the Blind* (1963), begin an exploration of this question. These books are camps that are no longer concerned with turning back only, having discovered the possibility of music. The alphabet — camp of available language. Blindness — camp where the body learns other modes of experience besides the scopic. These are open-air camps, leaving-the-house camps, even with the recognition of self-incarceration that's here, even when the writer's life is 'accomplished in this small town, almost in this one street in this house' (EA 12). The writer walks and listens to what she hears in 'the tunnels of speech and breath' (SGB 10), sensing, observing, allowing the new speech to come that is synthesis of her observing and sensing. To hear is to speak on this path, cries produced from the landscape, 'out of ancient rock and marshland, out of ice and stone' (SGB 252). To throw the net of music, to hear and so create a landscape in music, and then to listen to what comes back, the writer discovering that she too is a cry in the space of the bloody plain. With this music, words come from the body and not the other way round, sounds that come and go, rain softening, rainbow cloak of Iris refracting all that Apollonian sunlight. The stumbling and cries from this place are those of one walking in the spasms of labour, bringing new voices into the world. How to find speech for a self already inscribed in the old language? Here is the rock shelter, the roses growing 'tall and hollow', the skeletons of creatures 'exposed to a deathly weather' (EA 3), city and plain all under the sky of the ancestors. The writer lets the words come, lets them find their way into the air — her job is to arrange the folds of their signification, a labour of accretion, connection, creation of a rhizome. Bones, weeds, this camp at the edge of a precipice, the work all interconnected by innumerable strands. This is the line of flight Frame gives me now — a new voice constituted in the pleats of matter. Let there be an 'unalterable human composition ... the returns, the losses, the gains ... the long pursuit and flight from the dead and the goods of the dead' (EMT 179) — here beyond the pale the writer composes these things.

*What I hear*

Walking like an invalid,  
wits returning  
the layered cloud  
of a standing wave;  
water over rock,  
clean shine of bone  
grained like wood  
by the clutch of muscle —  
what I hear  
I am saying,  
this mouth any mouth,  
a little icon  
opening on  
a corner of blue cloak or sky.  
What I can't think,  
I am saying,  
sucked out by the gulp of air  
up and over mountains,  
pressed out  
by the weight of nights  
above this valley.

Clouds frayed invisible  
make rainbows in clear sky,  
scraps that fade and brighten.  
Words too, the body's thoughts  
*a reyny cope* against this light  
that burns my clothes,  
shoulder and side  
ash-white.

My mouth holds many weathers.

Not sick but carrying,  
we stumble sometimes,  
cry out and hear  
a new voice call.

Everyone talking now.

Still, it's a dangerous endeavour, to walk outside, to make the little camp on the edge of nothing. *The Adaptable Man* (1965), *A State of Siege* (1966) and *Yellow Flowers for the Antipodean Room* (1968) are books where I find the bleached skeletons, the crumbling walls that testify to consequences of attempting to separate oneself from other humans, from one's own history and memories, in order to pursue a dream of new language. This is a hope that brings death — it draws the attention of too much sun, bringing illumination as a 'deep burn of words ... of a first-degree language' (SGB 118) — collapse is inevitable, implosion under the pressure of everything that is being held at bay, and in the absence of structures which acted as guardians as well as warders. What is left after *going too far* in this way, when everything that guaranteed selfhood is gone? In collapse, the body is left to its own devices. Now it is possible to welcome the animal selves that constellate 'at the point of loss', cunning in knowledge of the bloody plain. This is an edge that brings the landscape and its inhabitants toward collapsing-self in its incapacity. The writer learns from the animal self that moves around the edges of the camp, whose gaze still belongs to the senses rather than to the surveying mind. The body's resources can be mobilised from this place, resources that include the rhythms of fairytale and the lines of flight the tales offer. Befriend the animals, the stories say, because they are 'guardians of the inner world of searches' (TC 11). Learn their speech and they will tell you the next thing you need to know. The writer surrenders herself to their presence, transmutes the explorer's impulse and lets the landscape that has formed speak for itself. It's as if the writer goes to the zoo and finds that the animals are looking back at her, that they've always been looking back, making free with her mind and heart, using her familiarly. Going out to the edge, she has invited them across and in, and now they live as part of her. With her 'dog heart, buffalo progeny' (DB x), the animals are making use of her broken pieces for themselves. Her speech and theirs become indistinguishable, composing a rhizome, a network of connections that forms the writerly body, 'like a dog digging a hole, a rat digging its burrow' (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 18).

*Afterwards*

*When we have lost the will to cling to life, life clings to us.*

refuge worker

In the end,  
she's a bombed building;  
floors, storeys collapsed.  
Crows bathe in bone-craters,  
shaking ashy water like dogs.  
Inside the shell,  
animals step forward,  
faces she hasn't seen before  
in the light's wrecked circle.  
New sounds flicker  
in the high cave;  
eyes, amber in oblique sun  
move like touch  
on scraps of polished wood,  
beautiful, purposeless.

With a strong rope of hair  
someone clammers the dangerous ledges.

The thing she protected is gone.

*Listen, explore, reconstruct  
in the echoing space.  
When the will relents,  
feel the touch of a muzzle,  
strength, heavy softness  
settling nearby.*

I'm standing on a beach out of Hobart, along a part of the dry eastern seaboard where every prominence and headland is riddled with muttonbird burrows, watching the young birds at once learning to fly and practising for their flight around the world. The parents have already left: the young will find their way alone to feeding grounds in the northern hemisphere. They fly in dense flocks, just above the ground, back and forth, back and forth along the beach. It's scary to stand in that flying stream, feeling it part around me as each bird turns aside at the last second. I'm thinking about the idea that they navigate by the stars on the long migration. Thinking about those Egyptian paintings of the sky goddess Nut, her body the starry firmament arched over, newly parted from the earth, her lover, thinking of Frame's description of seeing and making love with a naked man for the first time, staring at 'the red-roofed dovecote full of white doves ready to fly into the sky and never return; and I was the sky' (*EMC* 82). Thinking about years of stolen possibility:

the volcanoes whose lava buried another life in me, cities I never knew,  
 sparkling cities with towers and jewels; the earthquakes which  
     divided me, my time, my life, my sex,  
 my breathing in and out of,  
 my take and give ... (*DB* 175)

Cry of animals, a whole pack, the response to this loss. Speech as jointure, collective, where meaning is created, not just as ripple and resonance along the chain of monologue, but from the speeches and silences of interlocution. Exiles under the sky together, characters in the novels *Intensive Care* (1970) and *Daughter Buffalo* (1972) make a camp of animals — attempting neither severance from nor conformity with available language, but rather conversation which points the next direction, communicating signs of life, past or to come. Here is another 'turning', this time toward the animal self that mourns the desolation and disarming of the body, wandering in its landscape with a 'burning sense of loss and grief' (*AMT* 95). The self tells how it is 'robbed and betrayed' (*IC* 293) bodily, temporally, grieving, as the writer grieved in the asylum — waking 'toothless ... given the new shock-treatment ... I grieved for everything lost' (*AMT* 95).

*Direction*

Along the dry lakeshore,  
something skeins like fog —  
black snowstorm of the young flock rising.

Winter in the leashes of water  
that burn through my hands  
and in this feast—  
my animal self  
running into the lights  
among pocked stump-holes,  
the ghost of an orchard.

*the pointed tongue  
and all things fanged with light*

Where I am going,  
summer billows in salt-marshes  
swarming food.  
Round eye out of feather and fur,  
creatures are moving  
their prints are all over me,  
map and compass bearings,  
my starry nipples,  
my belly the night sky.

*voice is a supple body  
it walks in the valley of shadow  
it is eaten  
and it lives*

*read these echoes blindfold  
telling the world under fingers  
smoothing beads of sound  
into pleasure and use*

Circle or loop,  
back and forth,  
movement that makes  
the dark sound of healing,  
and all ways  
the singing direction.

The writer moves on to find or hear music in the cries of grief, her own animal voice emerging, moving to find or hear what it is that can bring healing. A self emerges which no longer seeks a permanent home. The novel *Living in the Maniototo* (1979) is the camp of this movement, camp of the *manifold*, 'like a wild bees' nest' (LM 118). Here is the writer's image for a moving self impelled by necessities of experience, continually reimagining, refabulating itself and its surroundings. Language as an effusion, a signature, recognisable and signifying — 'the bee comes home and leaves on each word traces of honey that we've never had before' (Alley and Williams 52).

February and it's time to rob the hives. All the lids of the boxes will be gummed with comb again, the marvellous sweated flakes of wax shaped into an intricate perfection of free folds wherever the bees can avoid my regime of rectangular forms. They treat the square of the box and its vertical sections like a sphere anyway, laying down brood and honey in concentric rings from the centre outwards. The wild swarm in the wall of the room where I write is a continual low vibration, and occasionally when I'm writing at night, a worker finds her way in through some chink in the lining and dives at my lamp.

Bees and shooting stars, single notes sounding in the night landscape, little intensities moving within the fabulation of dream or story: 'Sleeping, I dreamed I had a beehive in my heart...' Let it run, the dream or poem, let it build and speak. Sometimes when I'm working the hives, disturbed bees thick in the air, the sound they make begins to seem like a tangible element closing round me, as if the whole surface of my body could hear. From this clinging aural matrix, sharp voices emerge to which my body responds as if it has been touched. All of this — discomfort, strangeness, the sense of entering another realm in the ritual of preparation; the suit, the mask, the smoking of the hives before they're opened — in the service of finding something I've never had before: 'the golden bees were making white wax and sweet honey out of old bitterness ...'



## *Surfacing*

*Anoche, cuando dormía,  
soñé, ¡bendita ilusión!  
que una colmena tenía  
dentro de mi corazón;  
y las doradas abejas  
ibán fabricando en él  
con las amarguras viejas  
blanca cera y dulce miel.*

Machado (Turnbull 49)

Bees have closed us in their globe of sound,  
atmosphere of a planet,  
its white-hot core of brood  
and lapping amber.  
Singing is breath here —  
I've forgotten how;  
deepest air swarming at my nostrils,  
pressing in the whorl of my ears,  
waking the body's ghosts;  
old wrongs that twitch in thick muscle-plaits.

Somewhere nearby  
notes crowd on a manuscript,  
instrument-makers hammer the golden sweat.  
I want to steal from these archives,  
taste that music crumbling on my tongue:  
I'll be all surfaces  
folded and frilled,  
guts curled smooth as sleeping animals.

Out in the dark,  
struck chords ripen toward hearing,  
and all the murmuring traffic  
is sounds of a name:  
its burden,  
this composition.

Camps emerging from and returning to the manifold, the manifold emerging from and returning to the plain. A self imagined not in terms of particular moments — a history with its endpoint — but as process. Once this shift has occurred, autobiography can be written, movements of a life discerned and articulated in the three volumes: *To the Is-Land* (1983), *An Angel at my Table* (1984), and *The Envoy from Mirror City* (1985). Self can be a city now, mirror city of memory-as-imagination, imagination-as-memory, an image not of permanence (except as long as the books' materials last), but of complexity. Following Frame's autobiography, *The Carpathians* (1989) is a return to the novel, but with a difference. Here the writer claims the whole plain as home to a roaming self, a spirit of place. *The Carpathians* is a mapping of all the camps — of death, of exile, the losing and finding of speech — and the manner of their relation to one another, space and time folding, forming connections in memory and imagination. The plain has become the realm of the 'Housekeepers of Ancient Springtime' (TC 196), and the writer is one of the Housekeepers, who makes and hears and passes on stories of survival and renewal. The writer has come home to a wandering self, able to enter the city and to leave it.

How can I think a Mirror City? Here in the south, the end of the cold is a production. Ground orchids and blandfordia start to appear in the midden country of the coastal heath, and ghost-gardens of bulbs materialise in paddocks around disappeared houses — the whole place haunted by what it doesn't know about itself. In town, the dispossessed still congregate just as they used to by the rivulet, though it now runs buried in the heart of a shopping mall. What's new? Surplus bricks — the vetoed grandiosity of a waterfront hotel — go to build the police station. Faces reappear generation by generation in the heart of the city like a hallucination of the days that lengthen towards equinox, and each year, it seems as if the winds of that season blow these presences away before I can hear what they are saying. The sound of bells from the Anglican cathedral is everywhere, all broken apart by the wind.

*Tell it*

After winter, anything could happen,  
the ground rising in steam like a dark loaf.  
Lives are coming up,  
trumpets and bells from underground.

Prickling with lights, the town  
flinches where its past presses in too hard,  
fits too tightly, rough wool and lousy.  
Flashing evening to itself across the bay,  
its stories are shifting. Wind twists  
like meaning around floodlit landmarks;  
the belltower scattering changes;  
new pink watch-house and hotel.  
What are these places? Everything echoes,  
the dead and those not yet born returning,  
speech in fragments like a gust of bells.

Between equal weights of night and day, selves ribbon.  
In the whack of this air, I hear them whip,  
feel their loops flick past my face.  
In those turns,  
old paths still run to the water,  
thumbprints fold into new whorls.

Earth and sky have moved again in sleep,  
dark limbs, joints of light  
flung in patterns we didn't see before.  
Yesterday an eye opened in my breast:  
worlds are rolling there,  
the city a struck bell  
retold in this fracture or wound,  
new sounds from these pieces.

## Writing my city, writing my plain

What are the conditions of my becoming-in language — the writing practice I assemble for myself in the presence of ancestors? It's a heterological project, perhaps a little instance of the one Ian Buchanan speculates Certeau was engaged in theorising at the time of his death — a 'way of discovering and ultimately articulating the given *as the given*' (Buchanan, *Certeau*, 66). Buchanan argues that such a 'discovery' and 'articulation' might be approached through an understanding that Same and Other — the city planner and the pedestrian in the streets below — are each 'still becoming, and therefore never yet infinitely other' (Buchanan, *Certeau*, 72). (Other) self in (Same) language can be understood, then, as

a response – or better, a solution – to a particular crisis, not a definitive and unchanging entity, and is accordingly subject to profound transformations which can be treated as registrations of epistemological movements. (Buchanan, *Certeau*, 78)

I have to create a writing persona, signed as a practitioner of and in language, and yet who can articulate the deaths and resurrections of dissolution and breakthrough that characterise attempts to find lines of flight. In order to create for myself access to courage and desperation enough to attempt my own transformations and become a 'real person' (*LM* 13), I have to step through a series of disguises, names, attitudes. I have to give voices to my roaming selves, and among them, exiled selves that are given no place and desire no place in my daylight, responsible, 'family group' (*YF* 8). It is a homeless self, a self who experiences safety as imprisonment, who will make the moves necessary for creating lines of flight.

Shadows of winter vines wrap round my bones  
when I come back alive in my own flesh.  
Along the rooftops, scouring wind has shone  
a season's broken edges. Light will push

red sap into another flush of leaves,  
but no one knows my face. I wait and breathe  
the frosty margins of these lives. Their loves  
are thin and fearful; they've forgotten both  
their loss and this contagious ghost, my hope.

Behind each of their gestures, like a bruise  
my bright-edged shadow leaves a fading shape  
the eye can read like speech. I did not choose  
this desperate life; the flame that wrapped my birth  
was waiting in the tongues of silent mouths.

Constructing this mobile place-to-be involves losing the distinctions between thought and the practices that arise from thought, distinctions between analysis and action in language. I inhabit a world in words and wait to hear the music that belongs to that world. I move into the writing persona — an escaping-self, becoming-self, born from silence. Or rather, escaping-self becomes a moving centre, a point of intensity in the plain. How does this one, the self who escapes through language, live in the plain of subjectivity — what are the ways of being that characterise it? A first route of escape from the asylum of available language is via an altered habit of attention. The writing comprises things that seem to step towards me out of the world — mishearings that get 'inside the lining' (YF 159) of words — instead of 'the shaping hand of god', I think I hear someone say 'the shaking hand'. Images hang around and accost me for reasons I don't understand, beggars in the city of available language, beggars that sometimes turn into angels. Phrases play themselves over and over in my ear. Mishearings, images, musical sequences that repeat their harmony or dissonance — my becoming in language consists in letting these things move toward me, letting them divert me from the straight ways of the city planners. My first camp is a place of listening, away from the daylight mind, to language disrupted, even torn apart by the angel/animal self that has different concerns from mine, language torn apart

and reconstituted by the escaping self, Rapunzel climbing down the rope of her own hair.

A poem is a camp that these sounds and figures move towards, it consists in their organised presence, and they inhabit it as long as the poem lasts. A poem is a little world, an eye opening into sensation, observation; closing in fabulation. The plain I live in, the body that has been constructed for me in language, and which I modify in my becoming, is like the body of Rilke's Prodigal Son on which 'ulcers broke out ... like emergency eyes against the blackness of tribulation' (Rilke 111). And the city of available language that is asylum if I never leave it, and Mirror City if I can escape by learning to walk its streets in my own fashion — the city, as soon as it is written, is another point of intensity in the plain, another kind of camp. I am the plain and the things that move about on it. I am its creatures and the camps where they congregate. I am the city-world I can hold inside me, turning in its own time from day to night. Mirror City is any camp inhabited through all its levels, down through the graffiti and hieroglyphs on the faces of the letters of the words that make it up. To write it is to acknowledge that any territory I create is always too complex to encompass, full of its own life, always unfolding ahead of me, behind me.

In the city, cloud gathers  
like cataract in afternoon sky,  
lifts from its green edge at sunset,  
and earth rolls up  
an eyeball into night.

Now the shaking hand of god  
moves over the town,  
brushes cratered faces  
asleep in parks, catches  
in tendrils of backyard vine,

searches hollows and canyons  
alight with their own strange life.

A passion of longing  
holds and rattles  
the whole brief encampment.

Roots feel their shifting earth,  
the rock-shelf sliding below,  
angels bend the slender  
limbs of street-trees, calling  
with high bird-voices, chirruping  
news, delight or alarm.

We don't know what it is we hear.

In breathing dark  
we reach to console  
a blind and questing face  
turning inside its ring of stars.  
This is necessity, tiny figures  
leading away, finger to finger.

This is a place we know;  
patterns on darkness  
we can interpret  
till light begins  
through morning's smoky lens.

How can I write my own city, here where the censor walks all day every day  
saying it can't be done, unless I imagine I'm speaking to someone I love; that  
I am sharing this earth and sky of the plain which in turn shares my longing?  
Impossibility of writing — imagining the self and the people that are being

brought into existence, always just ahead of me, in the act of writing. The worlds of writing are set rolling at this point of loss — the realisation that there's no one to whom I could speak, that I must create the 'someone' I need in the moment of speaking, writing. I let the writing fall, word by word, drop by drop. I write as if I share the city, the plain, its camps, as if I already have a sense of sharing them, as if their skies don't belong just to me. That's the practice Frame leaves me, the line of flight she makes possible.

I imagine the shared plain through the figure of the animal self — sensation, observation awaiting fabulation in the act of writing/reading. Even in the city, perhaps especially in the city, the creature of my becoming assembles itself in response to valencies that may include a need for claws, wings, whatever must be used to help it to survive and to use the streets for its own purposes.

Animal selves approach me in the city of language not only as supplicants but also as predators, stalking my old ways, ready to tear them apart. The things that stay and step forward want something from me and they don't care how they get it. I want to change, and also I don't, I want to sleep on. Sometimes I want asylum.

Sharing air, sleepers lie prone  
under heat's casual paw. A creature  
lopes in and out the many-tunnelled warren  
of their dream.

They still breathe, the river  
breathes, and clouds pile  
arc-lit towers, exhalations  
taken up, returned.

Under rain's huge release  
the city shifts, flexes itself  
like a fist clenched too long,  
sticky and sore.



Wind flaps sodden hessian;  
something unfurls.  
Heavy and ready to leap,  
the mind translates;  
a wing, rough leather,  
the regular pattern of quills.

Behind, haunches gather power,  
long toes clutch.

Each age devoured by the next.  
Fear and desire:  
to escape,  
to be gripped and taken.  
Always the same end,  
to be torn awake.

Animal self and subjective space interconnected, with many entrances and exits. The angel is also animal, the animal is angel in its capacity to take on the qualities it needs. Qualities of becoming are sometimes those of a vegetable self like the ailanthus trees of urban myth, reputed to send their suckers questing through the floors of houses, appearing in living rooms, breaking up secure outlines of things and making asylum impossible. Insect self, too, busy with its own life. Only the persistence of this animal, vegetable, insect life could break the terror and defence of the self-created back ward where the figure of melancholy sits. Citizens of the fortress city will go to great lengths to be rid of these proliferating forms.

Today she hides in her room  
while wind like a shrivelling gaze  
travels over the city.  
Everything trembles,  
a low fibrillation, each thing drumming

the life of all the rest.  
Little wasps are flying,  
yellow and black,  
ferrying parcels of meat  
to dreaming brood.  
She thinks of poison,  
innocent talc sifted over  
the cells of a paper house.

Books and instruments  
keep her safe,  
though the wasp-nest  
hums and scratches in her wall.  
Spinning the varnished globe  
with an idle finger,  
ground that could steady her  
rises toward daylight.

Deep in the rounding horizon,  
streets point where the tree of heaven,  
all root, tangled away down  
through the roots of the city  
shoves first leaves,  
sharp shoots below the pavement.  
Pressing an ear to buckling tar,  
she hears them groan and ring;  
bridge-metal, conduit bringing  
the shelter of bitter sap,  
temper of earth and water,  
axis whose branches bud forth  
the myriad creatures, myriad worlds.

Going out, taking a line of flight, even to a camp elsewhere in the city, is experienced as the advent of a new world, approach to a becoming that is both supplicant and predatory. What I step toward is that which can't ever be forgotten — dream or nightmare of observed sensations clutching, altering perception, forcing reformation of everything around and rendering the change perceptible, leaving a witness to invisible movements like the giant, stationary dirigible-shaped clouds formed by moist air shoved high into a standing wave by a mountain range.

The angel sleeps  
with its head in the crook of my arm.  
It is very heavy.

I left my door open;  
the angel was pacing outside all night,  
leaning into ruin coming down,  
borne on the flood of its dream  
all grief — the dead,  
and those unable to die.

The angel leaves its marks in my face,  
bunching flesh underfoot,  
clutching along some current for purchase.  
Already the scar forms perfectly,  
its seam crossed opal.

My heart is a smooth river stone,  
with a stone leaf  
folded inside:  
I am running fast around it,  
the wave, my life,  
formed by its disturbance.  
Creatures whisk and scuttle among boulders.

High on the river bank,  
vines grow from split rock.

Still sleeping hard,  
the angel runs,  
shaking water on stones.

The break up of the old self, the old city, feels like hell. The new is built from the rubble and detritus of the old, and weeds that grow there send their shoots indiscriminately through flesh and earth. Constructions that once offered shelter now loom as wrecks threatening to topple and crush, and the comforting constellations of formulaic language disappear.

When she lies down  
a rose-tree grows  
from her chest;  
strong rootlets  
that follow her breath.  
They push up stems,  
throw out leaves,  
each axil a mouth,  
bud-tongue leaping.

Rose-speech soaks her through  
till she's flame-coloured,  
blood drawn up for a moment  
to flower over its ripped earth.

A roundabout of footfalls  
beats the softness down:  
her sleep has filled with angels,  
crowding, anxious to be fed.  
What can she give them

but crusted terror,  
news of disaster?

She has stumbled into shadow  
through an ordinary door,  
followed the cold-howling spiral  
down to this place.

The rose-tree sings its spiny fruits.  
In trampled ground seeds writhe,  
shoot-tips tasting earth and air.

Side by side, the unfixed stars go down.

I've thought of the moves of becoming as a flight of refugees and an invasion, like so many migrations — like my own people leaving Ireland for New Zealand after the famine of the nineteenth century in their desperation and hope and brutality. Like the transportation to Van Diemen's Land of so many, torn from dire urban or rural conditions and placed on what must have seemed like another planet, though an inhabited one. Writing practices of becoming are a taking up of new ways in the pressure-cooker of hope and desperation, under a new sky, mostly in the anonymity of night where new worlds shine, 'a word here, a word there; a planet or star or two' (*DB* 147). In this place, whatever sense of coherent self I bring with me figures both my death and my hope.

This hot night  
when air colludes with water  
to dissolve the bones of the world,  
the storm when it comes,  
desultory, bangs the lids of the town,  
trails a wet grey cloth over pavements,  
leaving them sweating a sticky ooze.

This hot night  
the tower is struck  
one more time,  
blast of its ruin  
widening wave on wave,  
over breakwater and oily dark,  
out to sea where a boat, driven on,  
lopes through the water all night,  
a long, travelling stride.

This hot night  
the little house holds  
a pocket of breath, cool  
at its windowless heart, listens  
from waking silence of doorways  
for sounds of deliverance.  
Planets rise and wheel,  
braiding a wreath of lights,  
faint in the city's halo.

Too far gone for sleep she walks  
cradling the weight of another self,  
dangerously light, head lolling  
into the curve of her neck,  
limbs spilling out of the circle  
she makes with her arms.  
Who can think of rescue now —  
only this walking, enduring  
what must be endured.

And if becoming is a kind of migration, perhaps the becoming self, angel,  
animal is an angel of the new place, and the self, the city, the camp is a

summation for a moment, of subjective geography. Deities of the plain of subjectivity, persisting, materialising in language wherever an attempt is made to leave the asylum; and the plain itself constituted by movement, by lines of flight. Here is the appearance of the collective — plain as shared space, and camp as witness to the 'immense influence' of those who have been rendered manageable, buried or lost in the city of available language. To create a line of flight through writing is to learn to follow the angel of place.

Slimed and lurking  
the beast is a local god  
gone into shadow.  
At home in the whirlpool  
it climbs dripping onto the page,  
puts the cold pad of its foot on my belly.  
Its terrible skull is waterworn  
but not the teeth and claws.

If I let it take me  
there'd be no air at all;  
we'd turn and turn.  
This is not what it wants;  
we have much to learn from each other.

Days wear themselves in the mind  
to manageable shapes—  
monster, child.

They inhabit a life that takes  
the dimensions of a room.  
There is no door, just the slam  
of years behind sandstone with  
those images that grip and tear:  
carcass-ribs knocking hollow  
like hanging meat; the spreading

velvet tongue of blood.

Step outside; in the streets  
streams are buried. Creatures swim  
in darkness at windows,  
exiled, curious,  
faces flickering animal, human.  
My hand sparks across the gap;  
they move, looking back.  
I follow.

So we remap the city,  
a network like veins,  
the remembered invisible flood.  
In time we come to resemble each other  
and what always was—  
that green boulder in the drain-wall,  
smooth, its stubborn ribbons of algae  
divining the watercourse.

To follow the angel/animal self once it has our attention is to be taken out of  
self-asylum for minutes at a time. The plain is not all bloody with such a  
guide. Perhaps it is not all bloody because ancestors like Frame have gone  
before us, letting us find some gentler country. What is out here? Creatures of  
language that can go about their business without being experienced as either  
suppliant or predator. A landscape to wander in, aware of the shaping  
presence of others, the motivations that arrange its folds; aware of a history, a  
struggle in memory/imagination and the taste of its fruit.

Thoughts like birds  
in a hedgerow I did not plant—  
one drunken crow  
all day in the cherry plums.



This abundance—  
my tongue stumbling  
on the edge of freedom  
here with ghosts  
in the deep-scuffed circle  
under the tree—  
these leaves,  
this cloud of wings,  
our cries  
that make a shape,  
the angel of place  
bellowing through us  
out of the ground,  
and high over the plain  
the city's groaning reply.

Beast, tunnelling through time  
from heart to heart,  
where you surface  
comes the rain  
which we must summon  
with your voice  
or not at all.  
Send us fruit;  
be the dark sun at its core.  
You will be sprouting everywhere.

How to settle into writing place, letting its sensations through, letting myself  
down into the sounds and tastes of it. How not to censor the dreams that come  
after a time in one place, how to give place to impressions, knowing they have  
no guarantee, allowing them to be only the tracks of my animal self in  
language. How to let them be, let myself hear what I hear, say what I say.  
Becoming in language is a movement of mutual approach — the animal self

and the self constructed in language moving towards each other. I wake from  
my long sleep in the asylum of standard language to move further into the  
details of animal/angel landscape, where the animal self uses my speech to  
produce itself from the belly of the world.

mudstone clears  
in my gaze  
and deep inside  
the snake  
slow with cold  
rests in a dry crevice  
between rocks.  
your forehead too  
thoughts coiling  
milk in water  
quiet life

it's like a chrysalis  
this sleep  
most of the time  
I'm kneaded down  
as if by rain

winter storms  
eat the land  
roots wash  
deep in salt  
and we're unearthed

this is how we speak  
the case cracked  
we're womb talk  
world's ventriloquism

names  
relations  
halting wingbeats  
the pen lifted  
over our silence

We keep going out into writing, going blind towards once only moments, meetings with a self that is yet to come. In the ethnographic moment of these encounters, our raw longing constantly undoes itself, coerced by the old and beautiful and familiar constructions that would turn a line of flight into a quest with its own fixed protocol. Faint trails on the high plain can become law, as powerful as any paved street laid down by city planners. Becoming in writing is a continual movement of escape into renewed possibility whose vectors — the road, the camp — are mistaken for the escape they signify, escape that is constantly changing form and slipping away. Possibility is found again with the sense of constraint that returns, bringing recognition of the mistake that is continually being made. As soon as we recognise ourselves as conforming entirely to the contours of the plain, we long for escape. Living in reclaimed possibility, each encounter with a becoming-self exists for its own moment only, the constellations of meaning that have formed us constantly broken and recreated in our own constructions. This day will not come again.

Sky like the hand  
of the blue god cupped over  
damp and warm.

Pilgrims and lovers  
arch against that palm  
on printed ground.

High in summer's house  
snowmelt has bled  
through fingers of stone;  
cloud shifts on the road

where the long fall leans  
to the watercourse.

Night comes and stars  
grit like sand  
when the day's lamp is out:  
my life has been formed  
in that rough hollow, hot  
with a prickling pulse.

I call myself home;  
the broken flock of the heart  
gathers again to roost  
in cradling dark  
as all things must  
before the flight to come.

To follow the watercourse way; to break up and rejoin as effortlessly as the autumn starling flocks that school like fish overhead, opening and closing around the hawk that dives through them almost harmlessly. To remember, like the landscape artist Andy Goldsworthy, who constructs his works from stones and leaves and sticks and snow, whatever is offered by the place he is in, that at any time, 'all my work still exists, in some form.' The work emerges as pattern and returns to its elements. Music, and then the dissolution of rain, everything returning to white noise.

When the soul crawls from its burrow after rain,  
the work of another season all scattered,  
washed and dismembered,  
what to do but start again,  
scratch in dirt,  
find what else is moving  
in the shift and dazzle.

Only tracks of a little calf,  
only the mouse and her child  
come to my door, and  
wings applaud the canopy of light  
that after all keeps nothing out.

Sometimes, fingers stopping ears,  
I hear my body hum;  
it sounds like  
water falling steadily,  
like the engine-room of a ship,  
like the gap I share  
with shapes that have no name.  
How we knead one another,  
bunch and wrestle toward the day,  
making and unmaking.

I'm back to the sounds that are words, words that are sounds, the patterning of music that constructs camps on the plain, places from which to inhabit Rilke's 'audible landscape' (Rilke 147). Things seem to step forward with and through this motivation — they move towards the moment of pattern and they are moments of pattern in themselves, they are 'hints, inklings of order', organising sensation. And this experience of being approached, this 'seeming', is my own step into the plain, my own conversation with the world, with my body, with the language that makes me. I build and I am built into this place in the language I claim.

Musician, play; heartbeats, intervals  
of our synapses thrown into air;  
inside-out, our landscape — hear it?  
a rising and falling country of breath  
where old life skips and bleats.

Dance, move us in patterns we're part of:  
outside-in, tidal shifts still match our blood  
while song makes a game of grief:  
listen, we can turn bitterness to arabesque.

Play, dance, sing;  
a tree of joy puts out leaves  
with each struck note,  
and bending to offer us fruit, answers  
the same urge that brushes these strings.

Exiles, just stamping our feet  
we bring ourselves home.

## Conclusion

... it was the desire really to make myself a first person. For many years I was a third person. (Alley and Williams 40)

... it's not Dunedin or London or Auckland or any other cities I have known. It is Mirror City before my own eyes. (EMC 191)

*Dream: Janet Frame and her friends are revisiting Dunedin. It is the town where Frame was born, where she went to university and later worked as a housemaid after a stay in hospital, and where she returned to take up a writing fellowship, a after a time in England, where her diagnosis as schizophrenic was overturned. We are all here for a conference or graduation ceremony. They are staying at a house I used to live in, when I first went to university after leaving home. I recognise it when I go to meet her there.*

This *thesis*, this putting or placing of things — writing/reading as a journey into the territory of language, placing the present over/alongside the past; distance alongside presence. Doublings-back, turns and returns of becoming — writing/reading as a genealogy of former selves, and a visitation of former dwellings; the creation of a new mode of habitation, new stories about how it is possible to be.

*In the first place — Chapter One — arrival: Why visit Mirror City, why start writing at all? How is it possible to think about motivation for the whole work as read inside the written Frame? Certeau and Frame confer:*

*She says: It's the 1920s, '30s, '40s in New Zealand; before that, time belongs to the ancestors. A young girl walks around inside her parents' house, she walks to school, she goes to the beach, she walks downtown on Friday night. The rules are strict; it's a one-track life — you can be thrown in the slammer here for the crime of being sad. People can die and still you have to mind your words. I begin to write what the minders*

say, and what happens to those who don't listen. It's a way of talking and staying quiet at the same time.

*He says:* Yes, people find ways around the rules — I call it tactics, the way you seize opportunities — the way you take control of controlling language, holding it up like a mirror to shine back in the faces of its police while you dance away.

*She says:* But it still hurts like hell to be shut up inside the book of the law. It's hard to breathe in here — it's the 1950s and the young woman speaks to me out of my old house, out of the pages of my books saying *I've been places, I've seen and heard and smelt and touched things that would make you howl.*

*He says:* To tell the story at all is to perform your escape. That's why you have to keep writing. Write the howl — it's a reminder of where language comes from.

*She says:* Yes I'll howl. It's the 1960s and I'm not just describing the inside of a cell now, I'm saying what can happen there — you'd be amazed at the acoustics here, the reverb I can set up in one little place. It's a whole new sound.

*He says:* That's where new language comes from — it's always the particular necessities of a time and place, the dimensions of the back ward, the place of consignment that precipitates new subjectivity, a changed form and mode of enunciation.

*She says:* I need to speak what is new in this time and place — my terrifying cry, unintelligible! is that my house has been built of words and that I alone must rebuild it each time I open my mouth, taking in and breathing out the air that fits too tightly.

*He says:* To cry the shape they have given you is to point to some other real.



*She says:* And to cry this shape is to die again and again — it's the late '60s and I'm using the death-figure openly now, saying that what an artist does is die. I have to tell you it costs lives, and I have to tell you it's worth it, this killing yourself without dying. The alternative is to be killed and that can be the end. The dead faces I pull from the water speak both their presence as possibility and their absence and disappearance in the city of language.

*He says:* Your figurations will take you places you need to go — they make a grammar of change that will let you dance in language and describe your dance. Follow the footsteps.

*She says:* Yes, yes I have it now. It's the 1970s and I give the space of my novels to writers, operators of language who can imagine the shapes — hypotenuse, manifold — that can evade the divisions of the city plan. I need to make a place to be, to mark out the shapes of my new houses, to pass the directions of my construction on through the open secret society of language. I need to make a house from which to tell my own story.

*In the second place — Chapter Two, Chapter Three — visitation:* We are here in the city of language, always revisiting. How can we make the necessary moves to create adequate space for ourselves? How is it possible to dance, to howl, to alter our way of inhabiting? What is a way to think about how Frame does it? I confer with Deleuze and Guattari:

*They say:* You have to approach creativity in terms of different modes of thought and articulation. We're philosophers — we like to think of the creativity of our mode of thought as a capacity to form and articulate concepts that rearrange constructions of reality. Another mode of creative thought, described by us as scientific, is one that articulates observations of experience, tracing coherencies that are also constructions of phenomena. A third mode of thought, which we

describe as belonging to art, articulates sensations, constructing realities of experience.

*I say:* Those modes exist side by side in Frame's work. She starts by describing sensations of constraint within the social/economic/political constructions of available language, then creates a series of observer figures who are able to make patterns of these sensations. Finally, by turning her observers into writers, she gives them the narrative tools they need to create conceptual fabulations of what they experience. With her, they formulate figures that act as concepts. From this conceptual base she can write herself a life, and she does — the autobiographies come next.

*They say:* Well, yes, of course, we said 'the three thoughts intertwine'. In fact, we've written a book describing a procedure for assembling a variety of tools of articulation — it's called *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. We understand Kafka's whole body of work as a response to constraints of the language that was available to him, language of a displaced people, and his creation of a new subjectivity in writing as a result of intensifying the poverty-stricken features of that language. He wrote a minor key inside a major language. It's rather like what M de Certeau might describe as a tactical approach. He found ways of engaging with the subjective constructions of language that made a new experience possible piece by piece.

*I say:* So I could read Janet Frame's work in terms of the components of her approach to language?

*They say:* Yes, and you could think of what she does as a way of undergoing what we call *becoming*, that is, the impossible movement of willed change into something that doesn't yet exist, for which there is not yet a vocabulary. We've traced a possible trajectory of becoming for a Eurocentric culture, a kind of photo negative, approaching it by specifying areas we think are most likely to be subject to blockage of

potential under conditions where everything is measured according to a man-standard — beginning with possibilities belonging to girl-children. We point to girl-subjectivity not in order to reify it, but to position it as a constant reminder of what is being stolen by the constructions of available language. Whatever this stolen possibility might be, potential for becoming lies that way. And after that, we say, change looks stranger and stranger — the unknown is figured as becoming-animal, -insect, given that the language we must use to describe it is that of the man-standard.

*I say:* Yes, you and Frame are contemporaries after all, facing comparable problems and arriving at some of the same figurations. She also uses the girl as starting point for explorations of loss and reclamation, and the howling of the animal-girl, the wolf-girl, can be read in her work as a figuration of experience in search of language. The components of an approach to language are assembled by the girl — she is a constant, like a standing wave, figuring both motivation and manner of constructing the new. Book by book, the girl is presented as negotiating relationship with what you describe as the 'machine' of language. In the early novels, she is represented as being caught inside the machine. Gradually she gains some agency through her recognition of language as an internalised subjective force, which is therefore accessible to a degree of manipulation. As a writer-figure in the later novels, she constructs the influence of the wolf-girl as a vector of her becoming.

*In the third place — Chapter Four, Chapter Five — flight:* We visit with one another in the city which is a joint creation, reading/writing. We make the city for one another, moving back and forth between houses, pages where the creation of myth occurs with the wolf-girl nipping at our heels, figure of all those who did not make it through to speech. Frame's writing-girl articulates a sense of responsibility before a collective, giving voice to a desire to write a new story, to create a new shaping inclusion, a hypotenuse.

*She says:* I write so as not to forget everything I heard and felt and tasted and

saw inside the machine, so as not to forget what can happen in there. I write myself a way out, and create the possibility for others too. What I write, the possibility I create, is informed by the howls of those I heard searching for language. I follow the burrows they dig, and they follow me as I excavate a place to be. Service to language is always service to a collective.

*We say:* We hear you speak, we claim your possibility for ourselves. We visit your city, read/write ourselves into the shapes of your houses, we go away and make our own places. We fold ourselves into the manifold. Your becoming is double — it belongs to us too, now, it hangs in our lives, we live within it. We think of you and the selves you create in writing as belonging to our becoming. Often we think of you as the selves you create.

*You say:* I hide in my writing so as to be able to hold my stories in suspension, spinning the air I breathe as I tell them, offering them as a way of staying mobile. The thing you are drawn to — the sense of urgent necessity that drives my writing — is my flight from a unitary self. That stilled, confined 'she' disappears into the folds of the manifold. Making the selves I present to you is my narrative project as much as any I offer in the novels. If I am to write for you I must hide from you — to let you into my house would be to give over the power of narrative I spent so long wrestling into my own hands. To take myself through the frightening transformations that move me away from available language is difficult enough without having you there watching, afraid, censorious, admiring — it doesn't matter what.

*I say:* But still I can claim the selves you make, which I/we make with you in the act of reading/writing, and that is enough, more than enough. I/we enter into conversation with what you write — the shock we feel is as much a sense of being recognised as it is of recognising ourselves there.

*You say:* Yes, and that is the writing, the textuality I long for, reading and

writing that is *known by* me and that *knows* me in turn. You understand the sort of knowing I mean. Whatever procedures I use in constructing the subjectivities that characterise my novels — the folding actions of memory and imagination — this relation to the creative intelligence of writing comes first.

*I say:* As I read your work I write my own changes too, in the poems and in the thinking-through of what you say. Day and night it goes on, the folding-in of your writing. One night after writing all day about your work I dream that a young girl asks me to watch her collection of vampire videos with her. I don't want to, because I'm frightened, but I don't want her to have to watch them on her own either, and so it is that we accompany each other through the smoke screen of fear. The young girl of your writing folds into the writing of Deleuze and Guattari, turns and returns with the writing of Certeau, speaks in my life as a self facing those powers that can bleed life away. And I/you/we answer, with words that articulate sensations, observations, stories constructing somewhere to breathe and be, putting, placing ourselves there — *thesis*.

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